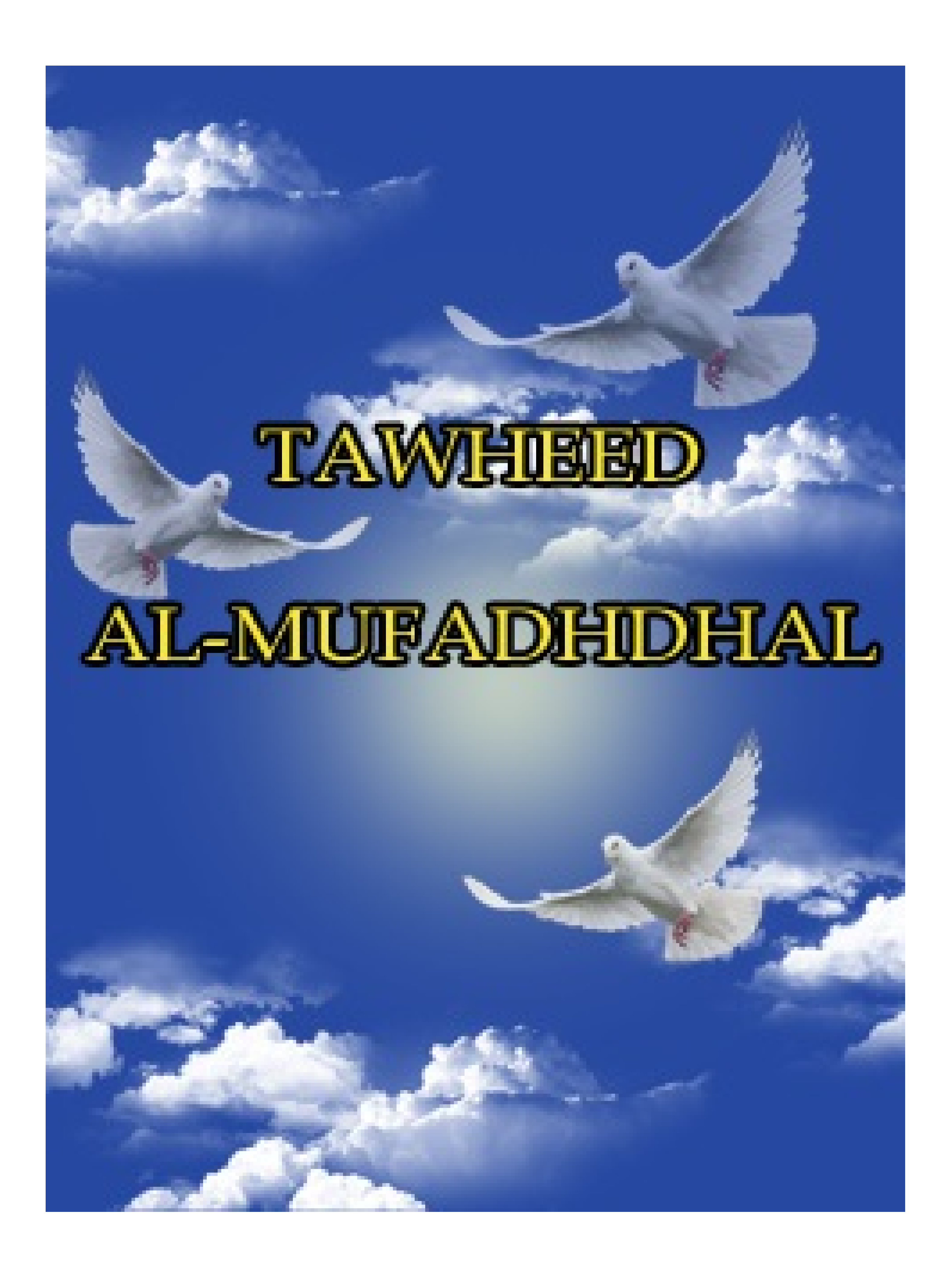

TAWHEED
AL-MUFADHDHAL


بسم الله الرحمن الرحیم

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In the name of Allah, the Compassionate, the Beneficent

"Intend they to put out the light of Allah with their mouths. But Allah will perfect His light, though averse may be the disbelievers." Qur'an, ۶۱:۸.

There has always existed a tough tug of war between the devilish forces of darkness and ignorance on the one hand, tending to disrupt harmony on the earth, and the forces of peace and order flowing from the sources of light and knowledge on the other. We do not have to go very far to seek out the reason. Man, according to his constitution, is very loath to submit to the discipline of controlled behaviour unless rightly guided by enlightened personalities through precepts and personal examples or forced by some external agonies. The libidinal urges within the human psyche, necessary for human survival when allowed to play within the limits, labor mostly towards extreme limits causing friction within the same human breast by the interplay of mutually contradictory emotions on the one hand and disorderly social conduct on the other due to the competitive rivalries of different individuals and groups yearning to secure the same material goods. The Western philosopher Spinoza has very tersely summed up the situation of humans in his memorable words: "Human beings are like hedgehogs gathered together for warmth." They would shiver to death if they tried the aloofness of Robinson Crusoe, but they would puncture each other's skins if they came too close together. Each individual's wants of

shelter, food, etc., must be satisfied as an essential part of fulfilling his purpose in life, which may be defined for want of a better terminology as “co-partnership in humanity's orderly progress to live blissfully in the world as well as in the Hereafter.” Man alone is the stumbling block in the way of this achievement because of his denial to be guided by the enlightened personages – the prophets and those in their wake – and because of his mad rush towards satisfying his desires, which however, as has been said, cannot be satisfied regardless of the efforts made for satisfaction. If society is to be saved from their barbaric conflicts and consequent degeneration to the beastly life of the jungle, checks and limits have to be devised and imposed on the ?hellish play of the desires. The question arises as to who shall impose the checks

Different answers have been given to this question, but the one answer that has repeatedly worked to man's everlasting benefit is the one that has been expounded .(from all angles by the truly enlightened Imam Ja'far as-Sadiq (a.s

The discreet reader will find in the pages that follow a veritable mine of information covering almost all aspects of human knowledge. He shall find that most of the information for which the West gets credit was transmitted thereto from the fountainhead of our great thinkers, among whom the most eminent is Imam Ja'far as-Sadiq (a.s) whose teachings are recorded in many collections of apostolic – narrations, particularly in Bihar al-Anwar

a vast Encyclopedia of learning in no less than twenty-seven volumes.([۱]) Imam as-Sadiq (a.s) lectured in Medina to thousands of scholars who flocked to this center of learning from all parts of the known world. They carried away to the far-flung provinces of the Muslim Empire the light of original thought and research. It was the torch lit ablaze by Imam as-Sadiq (a.s) in Medina that set his devout scholars on the path of inquiry and research. It was by this nucleus that the four corners of the known world received their awakening to the resplendent vistas of the various branches of knowledge. It should be remembered that all this was being achieved not because of any encouragement from the state but rather against the teeth of opposition .characteristic of despotic regimes

A very important aspect of this dissemination of learning, which runs as a soul-stirring strain throughout the system of education that was inaugurated by Imam as-Sadiq (a.s), is the insistence and emphasis on the Ideology of Islam and its fundamental tenet "Tawheed" (oneness of God). Imam as-Sadiq (a.s) himself, infused as he was with the crystalline purity of the Ideology, infused that same galvanizing spirit into his following. They, in turn, became the torchbearers of the light of learning in distant .lands, notably the Southern gateway of Europe – Andalusia

They were the people who "wrote one of the brightest chapters in the intellectual history of Medieval Europe. They were the main bearers of the torch of the culture, science and philosophy which made possible

the Renaissance of learning in Western Europe." Cordova, Seville, Granada, and Toledo, to name only a few of the centers of Muslim Spain, opened their gates to the teeming alumni who were seeking admission to the universities (See Philip K. Hitti's "History of the Arabs" PP. ۵۵۷-۶۰۵ for Muslim contribution in the cause of intellectual upsurge). It is on this account that Stanley Lane Poole in his "History of the Moors in Spain" mourns the fall of the Muslim Empire of Spain in these words: "The fall of Granada happened within forty years of the conquest of Constantinople; but the gain to Islam in the East made no amends for the loss to Europe in the West. The Turks were incapable of founding a second Cordova." Dozi, by no means a friend of Islam, is nevertheless compelled to pay a glowing tribute to the administrative, cultural, and, in .particular, intellectual caliber of the Muslims

Such was the influence exerted by these votaries of the Medinite School of learning that despite the secularization of the state by the rulers, their zeal was transmitted to the coming generations through the various centers that sprang up. Even Christian monarchs solicited their cooperation in their day-to-day administration. Thus, the Sicilian King Roger's administrations, both civil and military, were mainly staffed by Muslim intellectuals, who gave the court an oriental complexion. Philip K. Hitti attributes the prosperity enjoyed by his realm to the intellectual caliber of the Muslim staff. They not only administered his Kingdom efficiently but also manipulated his susceptibilities

as to imbue him with a Muslim view of Christianity. The chief gem of his court was Al-Idrisi – geographer and cartographer at Palermo.

It will thus be obvious to even a superficial observer that the torch lit ablaze by Imam Ja'far as-Sadiq (a.s) at Medina was the powerful lighthouse that illuminated the intellectual firmament of not only his own age but also the ages that followed. His own powers of observation are marvelous to the extreme as will be seen from a perusal of his works on the varied branches of learning, which, of course, always converge to the central theme of "Tawheed".

To cite only a few instances of his intuitive grasp of the nature of things, we may observe his ultra-modern, scientific description of the development of the human embryo through its various stages till its flowering into maturity, with special emphasis at each descriptive pause to focus the mind on the specific merit of ingenuity evinced therein. "The embryo in the world is adjusted, though it is confined within three distinct kinds of coverings — the outer wall, the womb and the placenta. This is the time when the embryo can neither manage his nutrition nor ward off any harm from itself. The menstrual flow is diverted to serve him nutrients, just as water carries nutrients to the plants, so this process goes on till such time as his constitution is perfected, his skin over his body becomes tough enough to withstand the atmosphere, and his eyes gain the capacity to withstand light.

When all this is accomplished, its mother feels labor pangs, which shake her severely, culminating in the birth of the infant. With the birth of the infant, the menstrual flow ... is diverted to its mother's breasts. Its taste is altered, so is its color ... it becomes a nutriment of the first order ... till such time as his body remains delicate, his organs and bowels soft and weak. As he begins to move about and requires tougher nutriment to build up a stronger constitution, his molars appear to masticate food to facilitate digestion. He carries on with such nutriment till puberty ... Who then created man from nothingness and Who becomes the architect of his worth? Who is ever-vigilant to supply his needs from time to time? ... If abiogenesis (spontaneous creation without specific design) can be admitted under such conditions of regularity, then purposeful generation and definitely-balanced order in creation will have to be admitted to proceed from error and disorder."

part ۲

These remarks of Imam as-Sadiq (a.s) are repeated by modern scientists in almost the same tenor. Let us quote the tenor of argument of some eminent present-day scientists who find their scientific theories inadequate explanations of natural phenomena without postulating the existence of the Supreme Designer. The discreet reader will bear in mind that the Imam (a.s) was born in the first century of hijrah, and as such it will be seen that he has anticipated these scientists by more than thirteen hundred years. The editor of Pears Cyclopedia has the

pregnant remarks, "This hypothesis (biogenesis) was upset by the philosopher Spallanzani (۱۷۲۹-۹۹, who follows Imam as-Sadiq (a.s) by some eleven centuries). Pasteur, the great French Chemist (۱۸۲۲-۹۵, yet another century later), founder of the Sciences of Bacteriology and immunology, gave a final death blow to this hypothesis ".of spontaneous generation

J. C. Monsma in his remarkable anthology entitled "The Evidence of God in An Expanding Universe" has collected some forty essays from the pens of the most eminent scientists of the day in this regard, all of whom echo the tenor of arguments marshaled by Imam as-Sadiq (a.s). It is not possible to quote all relevant passages from this magnificent array, which will recompense the study of it munificently. (The book has been rendered into Urdu as an authorized translation, by Prof. Abdul Hamid Siddiqi, M.A. and published by the Shish Mahal Kitab Ghar, ۴۲ The Mall, Lahore). A few .quotations from the book, however, are quite in order

Dr. Irving William Knobloch says, "As knowledge advances, science ceases to frown on religion ... The theory which states dogmatically that all higher forms of life have evolved to their present state by chance mutations, recombination, polyploidy or hybridization, requires an act of faith for adherence to it, an act of unreasoned acceptance ... The wonders of the universe have converted many neutral scientists to the belief that some One unknown and perhaps unknowable has been responsible for the vastness and order, knowledge whereof is distilled in every statement that has (escaped the lips of the Imam (a.s

while explaining the mysteries of this grand panorama of life on the earth. This strain runs as an unbroken galvanic current throughout the entire work and it is the one purpose of the descriptive observations to instill the spirit of inquiry and knowledge from this particular angle, to wit, the belief in the transcendent origin of the mysterious universe — as the handiwork of the Supreme Sovereign Designer. Unless mankind is weaned from its puerile suicidal disbelief to the maturity of a full realization of reality as propounded by the inspired geniuses of all ages, life on the earth will continue to be hellishly torturous." This theme was nicely re-echoed by the dean of the University of Hiedelberg in Germany at the reopening of the university after the war in ۱۹۴۵, when he stated, "We have seen in a shocking way what science is without a religious man in command. Medicine without God can destroy life and find cruel practice for concentration camps. Law without God teaches that right is what is of use and pronounces fearful judgments. Philosophy without God teaches erroneous ".ideas of man and invents most brutal weapons to destroy life instead of saving it

I believe in God because to me His Divine existence is the only logical explanation for" .things as they are." Thus does Dr. Knobloch conclude his essay

Dr. Walter Lundverg, Ph.D., who also has contributed an essay to the said collection compiled by J. C. Monsma, gives expression to his views thus: "A denial of the existence of God

is sometimes an arbitrarily established policy of influential social groups or organizations, or of the state. Fear of social consequences or even physical consequences, where despotism is the state creed, discourages any active espousal by the individual of the revelation of God found in nature … the scientific method is founded on orderliness and predictability in natural phenomena. It is precisely the orderliness and predictability that constitute revelation of God in nature. Order and predictability in the framework of non-existence of God, that is, absence of rationality, is a meaningless contradiction … Man is but at the beginning of knowledge … the basic units of matter and energy are incomprehensibly minute. His own life span is but an infinitesimal fraction of a second in the timelessness of the on-going universe. He conceives dimly of the possibility of new forms and dimensions of energy, space and time and of other such concepts as yet wholly unknown … Because man's understanding of God as revealed in natural phenomena is as yet very limited, it is in the nature of man that his belief in God should also have a spiritual basis, a basis in faith. Belief in God on the basis of faith is important to personal happiness in the lives of many men. But for the scientist who believes in God, there is an added satisfaction that comes with each new scientific discovery, for each discovery gives added meaning and significance to his concept of God."

Yet another eminent scientist Donald Henry Porter in his essay, "The

Answers to the Unanswered Questions," states his proposition in the following words: "Science is composed in the main of unproved laws or principles. This lack of proof does not prohibit one from using these laws as they might apply to various situations. It is not reasonable to expect proofs in the realms of the supernatural when proofs in the natural are lacking ... Whatever process of nature is considered or whatever question of origins is studied, as a scientist I derive satisfaction only by placing God in the leading role. God is the central figure in every picture. He alone is the answer to the unanswered questions." The whole tenor of Imam as-Sadiq's instructive exposition of nature is expressed in the words, "the universe stands before us with the leaves of its compendious volumes open for any man with a discerning mind to study and glorify the Supreme Architect." He identifies organ after organ of the human body, points out its physiological build and functions, and logically leads his listeners to the stupendous ingenuity that has gone into its constitution. "O Mufadhdhal! Do you not see that everything big or small is patterned on a flawless plan? ... Both hands are meant for handling business, feet are designed for locomotion, both eyes are for seeing, the mouth is for taking in food, the stomach is for digesting it, the liver is for extracting its nutrition for distribution to the various parts of the body in the form of blood, bile, lymph, etc. ... On arrival

in the stomach, the food is processed into chyme. A fine network of capillaries forms the liver, which is fed by the nutriment processed by the stomach. ... The liver then takes up the extracts of the nutriment and by an incomprehensible ingenuity changes it into blood, which is supplied to the body by way of the heart and pumped through blood vessels in the manner of irrigation channels. ... All waste products and toxic matters are then carried off to the organs designed to eliminate them, for example, the bladder, the intestines and the sweat glands. ... Glory then to Him who has organized all organs into coordinating units." The descriptions of the constitution and functions of the human body precede space, but always at a difference with the way .of the secular physiologist

Imam as-Sadiq's observations comprehend the whole of creation as witnesses to the Majesty of the Almighty Allah. The animal kingdom comprising of various species of carnivorous and herbivorous animals, the bird-life, beasts of the jungle and the domestic pets and draught cattle, water life, and the insignificant insects all receive due attention, but only as specimens of consulate ingenuity and design, witnesses to .the workmanship of the Almighty Designer

part ٣

The natural phenomena of the change of seasons, the alternation of day and night, the winds and rains, the waxing and waning of the moon, the movements of the stars, and so on, are all dealt with but with emphasis on the same proposition, as expressed :in the following statement

If for a"

whole or a part of a year the situation changes to the contrary, you can well imagine the plight of the human race. In fact what chance would they have to survive at all? Does man not observe such magnificent planning, wherein his own schemes would go away? They function automatically without interruption, nor do they even lag behind the time regulated for the management of the world's organization and ”.maintenance

The vegetable kingdom has its due share of notice. The grain, the fruit, the leaves, etc., are all marshaled as glorious witnesses to the eternal skill of the Almighty Allah. A few sentences expressive of the general tenor of Imam as-Sadiq's way of elucidating :natural facts will not be out of place. Imam (a.s) says

You will see intertwined in the texture of the leaf something comparable to the root“ system extending all along its length and breadth. Some of them are fine capillaries joined with thicker ones, all very stout and fine. If they were to be prepared by hand, man would not have been able to do the job of a single plant in a year's time. ... In a few days of the spring season, such abundance of foliage comes into being that the mountains and lowland regions of the earth become filled with it, without a word being spoken or a movement being made, just as the result of a fiat permeating all things — a single inviolable dispensation. ... The spring season clothes the trees with leaves and you get all

kinds of fruit, just as you arrange different kinds of delicacies before you which are cooked in turn. ... Who has planned all this? Surely He Who is the Omniscient Ordainer. And what purpose is served thereby? Surely that man may enjoy the fruits and flowers. How strange it is that instead of gratitude for such precious boons, man is ”!inclined to deny the Donor altogether

And what will the students of Botany think of the observations made by Imam as-?Sadiq (a.s) in regard to the female and male organs of reproduction among plants

There are female trees among them for whose fertilization male plants are“ generated, which fertilize without planned horticulture. The males, like those in ”.animals, fertilize the females, but are themselves sterile

We have not made a mention here of the beauty of the original which borders on poetry, though in translation and retranslation much of its beauty of style gets spoiled. :Just consider passages such as the following

The joy that is afforded by the scenic beauty and freshness of vegetation is“ incomparably superior to the pleasures and merriment of the whole world. (The green verdure of plants fascinates the eyes, delights the heart, and refreshes the mind). A hundred or so grains spring from a single seed. A single grain from a single seed would have been a (logical) plan. Why then such multiplication? Surely to amplify the production, so that the same may serve as food to last till the following crop besides ”.making provision as seed for the farmers

This brief review of

the subjects dealt with in the pages that follow, will convince the discerning reader of the incomparable worth of the matter, particularly the angle of vision pervading the whole text. The educationists of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan would do well to imbibe this spirit that should permeate all learning at all stages of instruction. Here is a work that deals with almost all sciences in a most rational way. The information imparted, then, will have an Islamic bias and redound to the production of scholarship of the true Muslim caliber. The ever-increasing wave of criminality and indiscipline in the land can be solved only if the specific outlook aimed at by Imam as-Sadiq (a.s) in his discourses is nurtured sedulously. Our socioeconomic problems cry out loudly for a profound chance in our outlook. Not only we in Pakistan, but the far-sighted among other nations are also troubled with similar misgivings. They too are ardently advocating fundamental changes in individual and national outlooks, from the narrow parochial views to the broad basis of human and universal principles.

Let us, in passing, notice the trends in Western patterns of thought in this regard. Dr. Pitram A. Sorokim, chairman of the department of sociology at Harvard University, in his very commendable book "The Crisis of Our Age – the Social and Cultural Outlook" quite profoundly analyzes man's chief problems in life. He states the crisis thus tersely:

"Ever expanding misery spreads its gloomy shadow over larger and larger areas. The fortune, happiness and comfort of untold millions have disappeared.

Peace, security and safety have vanished. Prosperity and well-being have become in many countries a memory; freedom a mere myth. Western culture is covered by a blackout. A great tornado sweeps over the whole of mankind. ... It is a crisis involving almost the whole way of life, thought and conduct of Western society. More precisely, it consists in the disintegration of a fundamental form of Western culture and society dominant for the last four centuries.”

He goes on to dilate upon the vile offshoots of the Western outlook as follows:

“Scientific theories based upon the truth of senses tend to become progressively materialistic, mechanistic and quantitative even in their interpretation of man, culture and mental phenomena. The social and psychological sciences begin to imitate the natural sciences attempting to treat man in the same way as physics and chemistry treat inorganic phenomena. In the field of social sciences all mental and cultural phenomena come to be treated behavioristically, physiologically, reflexologically, endocrinologically and psychoanalytically.”

It was this materialistic banefulness that was trying to force its way into the Muslim society, which the great Imam (a.s) fought to discountenance. It was due to these efforts that a great deal of the Islamic principles was salvaged from the political turmoils that agitated the body-politic. The weapons they used, to wit, propagations of the eternal values of the Qur’an by their discourses and practical conduct, served to maintain the picture of the fundamental tenets of truth and justice. Dr. Sorokim is stressing a similar need for a reorientation of outlook when

:he says

There must be a change of the whole mentality and attitudes in the direction of the" norms prescribed in the sermon on the Mount – fundamental transformation of our system of values and the profoundest modification of our conduct towards other men, cultural values and the world at large.... If neither religion nor ethical nor juridical values control our conduct, what then remains but moral chaos and anarchy? ("The ".(Crisis of Our Age," ۱۹۵۱ Ed. Pp. ۳۱۹, ۱۵۸, ۱۱۲

This English translation of the book is presented to the discerning public to serve as a beacon of light with the hope "that the grace of understanding may be vouchsafed to us and that we may choose, before it is too late, the right road, the road that leads not to death but to the further realization of man's unique creative mission on this planet," .to quote the parting words of the book mentioned above

The translator feels himself highly honored for the opportunity afforded to him to be associated with this truly great work following from the truly great encyclopedic .(personality – Imam Ja'far as-Sadiq (a.s

Muhammad Ibrahim

Narowal

۱۲-۱۰-۶۶

Hadith al-Mufadhdhal

In the name of Allah, the Compassionate, the Beneficent

Muhammad bin Sinan relates that al-Mufadhdhal bin Umar narrated to him, "One day, after the Asr Prayer, I sat between the pulpit and the tomb (of the Prophet) pondering over the excellences with which Allah had endowed our master Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him and his progeny) of honor and virtues and of which the public of the Umma had

no apperception, nor of his supreme eminence, perfect merit and outstanding grandeur. While I was absorbed in such thoughts, there arrived ibn Abul Awja’, an atheistic pagan. He took his seat within my hearing distance. A comrade of his followed him and sat by him attentively. Ibn Abul Awja’ started the conversation saying, ‘The occupant of this tomb has attained unique eminence in the entirety of elevated honor in all his accomplishments.’ His comrade adding an affirmation said, ‘He (Prophet Muhammad) was a philosopher. He made a mighty claim supported by miracles that confounded the common sense. The wiseacres dived deep in mind’s depths to penetrate the mysteries thereof, but all in vain. When his mission was accepted by the cultured, the erudite and the learned, the people in general entered the fold of his Faith in masses. The places of worship and the mosques of all places where the call to his prophethood reached began to ring loud and clear with his name side by side with that of the Almighty Allah, without any distinction of sea and land, mountain or plain, not once but five times a day in the Azan and Eqama. He got his name attached to that of Allah with the express object of perpetuating his memory ’.and to keep his mission dynamic

Ibn Abul Awja’ remarked, ‘Leave aside the mention of Muhammad about whom my reason is astounded and my thoughts are bewildered. Let us talk about the matter we want to discuss.’ Then he mentioned the genesis of things

in the universe. He claimed that no one had created them and there exists no Creator, nor Designer, nor Renovator. The universe by itself has come to existence and will ".continue to exist as such as infinitum

'Al-Mufadhdhal argues with Ibn Abul Awja

Al-Mufadhdhal says, "I was outraged to hear this and I said to him 'O disbeliever! Do you disbelieve in the Faith of Allah and deny Him, Who has created you in such comeliness transforming you from one state to another till you have arrived at your present shape? If you have thought about your own self and your sensation was truthful to you, you would have found in your own soul obvious proofs of the existence of the Almighty Allah, the signs of His All-comprehending sustenance and the '.evidence of His boundless workmanship

Ibn Abul Awja' said, 'O you, if you are a man of argumentation, we will argue with you and if you prove your evidence, we will follow; otherwise, you have no right to talk. If you are from the company of Ja'far bin Muhammad as-Sadiq, it does not behove you to talk in the strain you do, for his is not this mode of address, nor does he argue with us in such impropriety. He has heard more of our words than you have done, but he has never used any impropriety nor has he ever retorted aggressively. He is very forbearing, dignified, reasonable and of mature intellect. He is neither harsh nor touchy. He listens to our talk very attentively. He

invites our arguments, so much so that when we have exhausted our armoury and we think we have silenced him, he with a brief resume stultifies all our reasoning and dumbfounds us, so that we are left without a plank to answer the arguments of the revered personage. If you are of his company, then talk to us in the same strain."'

Al-Mufadhdhal said, "At this, I came out dejected and thoughtful because of their disbelief in Allah and the consequent tribulation of Islam and its votaries because of this disbelief and a presumption of the meaninglessness of this universe. I betook myself to my master (a.s). On seeing me dejected, he asked me the reason thereof. I related to him the conversation of those atheists and the way in which I had tried to rebut their arguments. He asked me to come to him early the next day when he would disclose to me the immense ingenuity of the Almighty Artificer manifested in this entire universe comprising of beasts, animals, birds, insects, and all living beings, whether animals or plants, fruitful or fruitless trees, wheat or legumes, edible or non edible, that it may be a lesson to those who take lessons. The believers would be delighted to have such knowledge and the atheists would be confused."

The First Meeting

explaination

Al-Mufadhdhal said, "I left him so happy and delighted. That night felt so long while I waited for that which he had promised me. In the morning, I went to him. After being permitted, I went in and

stood before him. He asked me to have a seat, and I did. Then he went up to a room to where he would often retire in solitude. I got up too. He asked me to follow him. He entered the room, and I entered after him. He sat down, and I sat before him. He said, ‘O Mufadhdhal! I feel as if you have had a lengthy night because of your anxiety for what I had promised you.’ I affirmed his remark respectfully. He said, ‘O Mufadhdhal! Allah has existed before there was any thing and He will exist with no end. Praise be to Him for what He has inspired to us and thanks be to Him for what He has granted to us. He has singled us out with the best of knowledge and the highest of honors and has preferred us to all of His creatures by giving us from His knowledge and has made us guardians over them by His authority.’ I said, ‘O my master, would you permit me ’.to write what you say?’ He said, ‘O Mufadhdhal, yes

Imam as-Sadiq (a.s) said, ‘O Mufadhdhal! The waverers failed to grasp the causes and meanings of the creation and their minds were unable to see the right and wisdom in what Allah has created of different kinds of His creatures in the sea and on the land, in the plains and on the mountains. Because of the deficiency of their knowledge, they ,disbelieved and because of the weakness of their sights

they denied and resisted until they denied the creation of things and claimed that things had come to existence by accident and chance with no will, ordinance or wisdom from a maker or manager. Allah is far above what they attribute to Him. May they perish! How misguided they are! In their misguided blindness and bewilderment they are like blind persons groping right and left in a well…furnished, well…built house with fine carpets, luscious articles of food, drink, various kinds of clothing and other necessities of essential use all adequately supplied in proper quantity and placed with perfect decorum and ingenious design. In their blindness they fail to see the building and its furnishings, they move about aimlessly from one room to another, advancing and retreating. If by chance anyone of them finds anything in its place to supply a need, therefore and not knowing the purpose for which it is set there and unaware of the underlying ingenuity, he might begin to reprimand the architect of the building in his offensive rage, whereas, as a matter of fact, the fault is due to his own inability to see. This analogy holds good in the case of the sect who deny the creative factor and the argument in favour of the divine management. Failing to appreciate the merit of their provision, the perfection of creation and the beauty of design, they start wandering in the wide world, bewildered by their inability to grasp with their brains the underlying causes and principles. It so happens sometimes

that some one among them is aware of a thing but due to his ignorance of its reality, purpose and need begins at once to find fault with it, saying, "it is untenably wrong." The followers of Mani, (a man who founded a Zoroastrian sect in the time of King Shapur, the son of Urdsher who believed in the prophethood of Jesus but denied that of Moses and who believed in the duality of divinity as the creators of all good and evil in the universe – one light as the creator of all good things, the other darkness as that of beasts and harmful creatures) who, as the heretical bigots of devilry, have begun openly to propound their heresies. Besides these, some misguided persons have also gone astray from the divine favours, by merely declaring as untenable or impossible .certain facts

It behoves the person, whom Allah has endowed with the gnosis of Reality and whom He has guided to His Faith and who has been granted insight, to ponder over the beauty of the design underlying the creation and who is gifted with the expression of the merits of such things on the basis of cogent reasoning and fine distinction, it behoves such a person to glorify the Almighty Allah consummately as his Lord, for such celestial favour, and to pray to Him for the increase in gnosis and a steadfastness therein with lofty power of expression thereof. Allah says, "If you are grateful, I would certainly give to you more, and if you

([are ungrateful, My chastisement is truly severe.”([۲

The Universe And Its Parts

O Mufadhdhal! The structure of the universe is the foremost evidence of the existence of the Almighty Allah – how the parts thereof have been set together and ordered as they are. If you think about the world deeply, you will find it like a house furnished with all what its inhabitants need. The sky is like a canopy. The earth is spread like a carpet, while the stars set in stratum upon stratum appear as lamps alight in their places. The gems are treasured as if the house has lots of collections. Besides, every thing is readily available to meet all the needs. Man is like the owner of that house and authorized with everything therein. And there exist the different plant species available to meet man’s needs; some as fodder for the animals, others as drugs for human beings, some merely for ornament, some to supply fragrance to man for his recreation, some as drugs for animals, some as nutriment for man, some for birds only, and others for the quadrupeds alone and so on. Different species of .animals have been allotted functions for particular exigencies and interests

There is a manifest proof in this beautiful composition, cohesion, combination and admixture, that this world is the work of a Creator, Who has produced it on a balanced plan, impregnated it with ingenuities and established order therein; all bearing proper connection and furnishing proof of the unique Creator, Who has combined them in such elegance as to compound

them into a unity ... glory be to Him and Exalted is He. There is no god but Him. He is .far above what the infidels attribute to Him

The creation of man

O Mufadhdhal! We now start talking about the creation of man so that you may learn a lesson from it. The first step in the creation of man refers to the state when the embryo in the womb is adjusted, though it is confined within three distinct kinds of coverings and three kinds of darkness – firstly that of the outer wall, secondly of the womb and thirdly of the placenta. This is a time when the embryo can neither manage its nutrition nor ward off any harm from itself. The menstrual flow is diverted to serve it nutrients, just as water carries nutrients to the plants, so this process goes on till such time as its constitution is perfected, its skin over the body becomes tough enough to withstand the atmosphere so that it does not receive any harm from the air, and its eyes gain the capacity to withstand light. When all this is accomplished, its mother feels labour pangs, which severely shake her to uneasiness culminating in the birth of the infant. With the birth of the infant the menstrual flow, which served for nutrition in the womb, is diverted to the mother's breasts. Its taste is altered, so is its colour altered and it becomes a nutriment of quite a different kind, which exactly suits the temperament of the infant who is

in need of it, compared with the flow of blood. Simultaneously with his birth, he starts moving and licking his lips with his tongue to indicate his desire for milk. He finds his mother's pair of breasts as luscious reservoirs hanging to provide nutrition for him. He gets his nutrition from milk in this way till such time as his body remains delicate, his .organs and bowels soft and weak

Need of Teeth and Growth of Beard

As he begins to move about and needs harder food to build up a stronger body, his molars appear to masticate food materials to facilitate digestion. He carries on with such nutriment till Puberty. The male grows hair on the face as a sign of manliness, to gain honour as man, thus over...stepping the stage of adolescence and likeness to females. A female keeps her face clean lovely and hairless, to preserve her freshness and comeliness, as an attraction for the males in the service of the survival of the .race

O Mufadhdhal! Can you imagine that the manner in which man, through these different stages, is led and perfected, can take place without a Designer and a Creator? Do you think that if the menstrual flow had not been diverted to him while an embryo in the womb, would he not have been dried up just like the plants deprived of water, and had he not been motivated by labour pangs after he had been matured for birth, would he not have been buried in the womb just as living infants used to be buried

in the earth, and had he not been supplied with the suitable kind of milk, would he not have starved to death, or if he had not been fed with nutriment suited to his temperament and capable of perfecting his body, and if his teeth had not appeared at the proper time, would it not have been difficult for him to feed, masticate and digest his food, and if he had not passed through the milk-infancy, would not his body have suffered in strength and been incapacitated for any kind of work and would be a permanent charge on his mother to keep her busy with only his nurture and ?upbringing without leaving her time to look after other than himself

Had not his face grown hair at the proper time, would he not have stayed in the form of adolescents and the figure of females, without any dignity or prestige like the ?eunuchs who have a repulsive look in the absence of the beard

Absurdity of Atheism

If abiogenesis (spontaneous creation without specific design) can be admitted under such conditions of regularity, then purposeful generation and definitely balanced creation can be the result of error and perplexity, since these two are opposed to abiogenesis. Such a statement is highly absurd that order and rectitude should come about without a creator and disorder and impropriety of design and fate should pre-suppose a Creator. He is an ignoramus who says this because anything produced without design will never be exact and proportioned, while disorder and contrariness cannot coexist with orderly

.design. Allah is far above what the heretics say

Reasonable infant

And in case an infant had been born with mature intellect, it would have been bewildered in this world that would seem so strange to him, in an unrecognisable environment abounding with animals and birds of varied forms all around which .would be the focus of his vision every moment and day after day

O Mufadhdhal! Consider the case of a man migrating to another country from the prison of one country. If he has a perfect intellect, you will see him perplexed and astounded. He can neither soon learn there the language, nor acquire the etiquette and decorum of the place. On the other hand, one who is taken as prisoner to a strange land in his early days when his intellect is immature, he shall soon learn the language, etiquette and manners of the place. Similarly, if a child had been born with mature intellect, he would have been astounded on opening his eyes and seeing such varied assortment, different kinds of forms, and distinctive imagery of unity and disunity. For a long time he would not be able to understand as to whence he had come and where he has arrived and whether all that he was seeing was in a state of .dream or waking

Then if he had been born with mature intellect, he would have felt disgusted and degraded on finding himself being carried about in the lap, being fed with milk, being wrapped in bandages (after the manner of the Arabs

and being laid in the cradle; all these proceedings being necessary for infants because of their soft and delicate bodies).

There would not have been, if they had been born with a mature intellect, that sweetness, nor that consideration for the infants in the minds of the adults which springs generally from fondling the untutored children because of their artlessness creating a particular attraction for them. As such, he is born in this world without an understanding for anything, quite unaware of the world and what lies therein.

He views all these things with his underdeveloped brain and inadequate understanding, and so does not feel perplexed.

His intellect and understanding by degrees, slowly, from time to time, little by little develop, so as to introduce him gradually to the things around and to accustom his brain accordingly so as to habituate him thereto without further need for curiosity and wonderment, thus enabling him to seek his sustenance serenely without understanding and planning, to bend his efforts thereto and to learn the lessons of obedience, error and disobedience. And behold!

There are other aspects of the matter. If the infant had been born mature in intellect with an understanding of his functions, there would have been little occasion for the sweetness felt in the nurture of the offspring, and the exigency, under which the parents find a whole time preoccupation with the affairs of their young ones, would not have arisen. Love and affection, felt for children, would not subsist between the parents and their offspring. Because of their mature

intellect, the children would not have needed parental care. A separation would have taken place just after birth of the infant from its parents. He would not know his father and mother, and therefore, he would not refrain from getting married to his mother or sister or any mahram([٣]) woman whom he did not know. Besides, it would be too ugly and shameful that if he was born with full mind and understanding, he would see from .his mother, when being born, that which he should not see

O Mufadhdhal! Don't you see that every thing big or small has been created on a ?flawless plan without fault or error

Advantage of crying

O Mufadhdhal! Consider the advantage of crying to children. There is a fluid in the child's brain which if not drained off may cause trouble or illness, even the loss of an eye. The discharge of the fluid from its brain leaves it healthy and the eyes brighter. The child is benefited by weeping, while its parents, in their ignorance, try to prevent his weeping by catering to his wishes, not knowing the benefits thereof. There are similar other advantages, which these atheists fail to grasp. If they could have grasped them, they would not have denied the existence of such benefits therein. The gnostics understand what is unintelligible to such deniers. It so happens oftentimes that the creatures know not the wisdom thereof, though it is within the knowledge of .the Creator

The saliva dripping from the mouths of children may cause serious derangements if not

allowed to flow. This can be seen in the case of those with an excess of saliva, who sink down to the level of idiots, imbeciles, and fools and succumb to other diseases like paralysis – general and facial. Almighty Allah has ordained that fluid should be discharged by way of the mouth in early age to keep him healthy in later age. Allah has granted this boon, of the profundity whereof they are ignorant. They are allowed this respite to acquire knowledge of the wisdom underlying therein, so as to become gnostic. Had these people appreciated all these boons, they would not have stayed in sin so long. So all praise and Glory is due to Him. How grand is His Beneficence. His blessings are for all whether deserving or not. He is far exalted above what these .misguided persons say

Genitals

O Mufadhdhal! Just consider the male and female organs of copulation. The male organ is capable of stimulation and expansion so as to spawn the uterus with sperm, that being its function, being itself incapable of developing the foetus and as such required to transfer the sperm to the uterus of the female – a deep receptacle fit to efficiently preserve the two seminal fluids, to develop the foetus by expanding proportionately with the increase in its size, to prevent any pressure on it, to preserve it till it is strengthened and toughened. Is it not designed by a Deep Seeing Designer? Have all these works of ingenuity or these elegant proportions come

about by themselves? Allah the Almighty is far exalted above the heresy of the .polytheists

O Mufadhdhal! Just consider the various organs of the body, the functions each one is required to perform and the perfection of design that underlies each. Both hands are meant to handle business, both feet are meant for locomotion, the eyes are to see with, the mouth is to take in food, the stomach is to digest it, the liver is for clearing, the orifices of the body are meant to eliminate waste products, and the private parts for reproduction and you shall find that every organ is exactly fitted to perform its ’.specific functions and is constituted with perfect design

Mufadhdhal said, ‘Sir! Some people believe that all this is the outcome of the function ’.of nature; each organ coming into existence as and when required by nature

Imam as-Sadiq (a.s) said, ‘Just ask them whether the nature which functions in such a well…planned and well…ordered fashion – does it have knowledge and power to do ?such things

If they admit that it possesses knowledge and power, then what obstructs them from believing in the Creator? What we say is that all things are created by One Who is the Master of Knowledge and Power. They say that there is no Creator and yet admit that nature has done this with ingenuity and plan. As such nature is the cause of their creation, while they deny the Creator. If they say that nature produces such things without knowledge and power – not knowing

what it is doing nor having the power to do it – in connection with the type of design and ingenuity that subsists in all phenomena, it is something inconceivable that something may be performed without corresponding power to do it and without a knowledge thereof. As such it is obvious that the action emanates from an Omniscient Creator, Who has laid down as only a method among His creation through His omniscience, which these people call nature. In other words Allah the Almighty has ordained a method to produce everything according to its definite cause and principle. As for instance, a seed needs water to sprout, no rain no corn; a child is born by the union of man and woman; without this procedure of union and insemination no child can be born; water evaporates to cause a cloud, the cloud is moved about by air to give rain; there can be no rain without such a process. These atheists took these causes and nature as the real Creator, denying the existence of the Creator above all these. This is manifest error, seeing that water is lifeless and unless it is enlivened by the Life…Giver how can it produce corn? And how can the sperm which is without intelligence, develop into an infant unless energized by the Omnipotent to create a head out of one part, hands and feet from other parts, bones from yet another part and heart and liver from another? Other forms of creation can be considered .accordingly

Digestion

O Mufadhdhal! Just

consider the nutrition supplied to the body, and the ingenious plan underlying it. Just note that on arrival in the stomach, the food is processed into chyme and the extract is transferred to the liver by fine capillaries forming a network in that organ. The stomach is constituted as a rectifier to transfer materials to the liver in rectified form, .to prevent injury to that delicate structure

The liver then takes up the extract of the nutriment taken in, and by an inscrutable in…genuity changes it into blood to be pumped by the heart to all parts of the body by means of blood…vessels as the manner of irrigation channels seen in gardens and fields supplying water to any place requiring irrigation. All waste products and toxic matters are carried off to organs designed to eliminate them. The bile matter goes to .the gallbladder, some matter goes to the spleen, and the moisture to the bladder

O Mufadhdhal! Just consider the ingenuity that has gone into the building up of the body! How nicely are these organs co-ordinated! How the vessels, the intestines, the bladder, etc., are organised to collect the waste products of the body so as to prevent .them from being scattered all over the body and causing diseases and decrepitude

Glory, then, is to Him Who has created these organs according to a remarkable plan ’.and a redoubtable design. All praise is due to Him, Who is worthy of it

Development of man

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Al-Mufadhdhal said, ‘Please Sir, explain to me the gradual development of the body stage by

’.stage till its perfection

Imam as-Sadiq (a.s) said, ‘The first stage of this development (of man) is the embryo in the womb that is invisible to the eye and inaccessible to the hand. His development proceeds apace, till he is perfected in body with all organs and parts complete in every detail; the heart, the liver, the intestines and all working parts, the bones, muscles, fat, the brain tendons, blood-vessels, the cartilages all fully developed. He enters this world and you see how he develops on together with all his organs in proportion, preserving at the same time all his features without any addition or diminution. The body progresses on while retaining its well-knit form, till his maturation, whether his .life span is lengthened or shortened

Is not this profound planning and ingenuity elegantly designed by the Omniscient ?Designer

O Mufadhdhal! Just consider the excellence and merit of man's creation over the animals. He has been created to stand erect and sit squarely, to be able to hold things in his hands, to acquire them with his organs and to treat things with his organs. If man had been hunched like animals, he could not have performed the tasks he does .now

Just consider O Mufadhdhal, the senses specifically superior to those of animals in .point of constitution and efficiency so as to endow him special merit thereby

The eyes are set in the head as if a lamp is set on a lamp-post to enable man to see everything. They are not set in the lower parts like the

feet and the hands to be safeguarded against injuries or accidents during work or movement, which would have ailed them and impaired their efficiency. Had they been set in the middle part of the body like the belly, the back or the breast etc., it would have been difficult to revolve them or to see things by sudden turning. The head is the cynosure; the best place for these senses in suitability compared with any other .organ

The senses are made five in number to respond to all kinds of stimuli and to leave no .stimulus undetected

The eyes are so constituted as to distinguish between Colours. The colours would have been meaningless without such ocular proficiency, since these colours exist as a means whereby things may be distinguished from one another or the eyes may get .recreation therefore

The ears are set in the head to detect sounds, which would have been meaningless without such auricular proficiency. Similar is the case with other senses – without proficiency of the sense of taste, all tasteful foods would have been dull, without the sense of touch, the sensations of heat, cold, softness, hardness would as well have .been nonexistent and without the sense of smell, all scents would have been inert

And vice versa; if there were no colours, the eyes would be ineffective. Without sound the ears may as well be non…existent. So just consider how it has been ordained that there is a definite correspondence between the sense organ and the sensation…stimulus interacting mutually. We cannot hear with

our eyes, nor distinguish colours with our ears, nor smell except with our nose, and so .on

Then there are media interpolated between the sense organ and the sensation…stimulus, without which the link cannot be established. As for example in the absence of light to reflect colour, the eyes fail to recognise colour, and without air .to set up sound waves, the ear would not be able to detect any sound

O Mufadhdhal, can it be, then, hidden from one who has been endowed with sound reason and who utilises his intellect correctly, after all the details I have given about the interconnection between the sense…organs, the sensation…stimulus and the media linking them to complete the process, that all this has been planned and execu… ?ted by the Omniscient, Almighty Allah

O Mufadhdhal! Just consider the case of a person who has lost his eyesight and the loss he suffers in his day…to…day work. He cannot perceive his foothold, nor can he see ahead, nor can he recognise colours, nor appreciate a pleasing or an ugly thing. He will not be able to know a hollow ground, nor know an enemy with a drawn sword, nor can he undertake any of the handicrafts like writing, business or goldsmithery. .Without his brain, he would be like a stone at rest

Similar is the case of a man deficient in hearing. He suffers loss on many counts. He has no relish for conversational talk, nor a sense for pleasant or unpleasant sounds. People have difficulty in conversing with him and they get

annoyed with him. He does not hear anything of people's news or talks until he becomes absent though he is present and dead though he is alive.

The person devoid of intelligence is worse than cattle, for even the cattle recognise many a phenomena unintelligible to him. Don't you perceive that these organs, systems, intellect and everything else required for his adjustment and without which he is at a serious disadvantage in point of the perfection of his build are duly provided? Have all these been produced without balance and knowledge? Certainly not! They are necessarily the outcome of definite design and planning of the Almighty Designer.'

Mufadhdhal said, 'Sir! How is it that some people lack some of these organs and systems and undergo the losses that you have described?'

Imam as-Sadiq (s) said, 'It is for the admonition of the person lacking them and of other people as well that the monarch admonishes his subjects in such a way and such admonition is hardly resented, rather it is appreciated as a stratagem and is eulogised.

The people who are thus afflicted will be recompensed after death, provided they are grateful to Allah and they turn to Him, so munificently that all the troubles undergone by them due to the lack of such organs will appear trivial in comparison, so much so that if after death they are allowed the choice to return to those troubles they would welcome the opportunity to earn higher recompense.

O Mufadhdhal! Just consider the ingenuity and balanced design underlying the production of the

organs and systems in pairs or as single units. Just consider the head which is created a single unit and it is but just appropriate not to have been created in more than one unit. A second head would have been only an additional weight; quite unnecessary, seeing that one head comprises all the senses needed for man. Two heads would have meant two parts of men. So if he used only one for talk, the other would have been redundant. To have used both simultaneously for the same talk would have .been meaningless, inasmuch as no further purpose is served thereby

A person would have been much handicapped in the business he had to transact, if he had been created with one instead of a pair of hands. Don't you see that a carpenter or a mason is unable to carry on his profession if one of his hands gets paralysed? And in case he tries to do his work with a single hand, he cannot perform it as dexterously .and efficiently as with the help of both hands

O Mufadhdhal! Just consider a man's voice and conversation and the constitution of the organs concerned therewith. The larynx, which produces the sound, is like a tube .while the tongue, the lips and the teeth mould the sound into letters and words

Don’t you see that a person who loses his teeth cannot reproduce the sound of the letter “s”? He who gets his lips cut cannot pronounce “f”, while a thick tongue cannot give the sound of

r". A bagpipe resembles it a great deal. The larynx is comparable to the pipe, and the" bag into which air is blown corresponds to the lungs containing air. The muscles controlling the lungs to produce sounds resemble the fingers pressing the air of the bag into the pipe. The lips and teeth, which mould the sounds into letters and words, correspond to the fingers on the orifices of the pipe giving rise to music and song. The larynx here has been regarded as an analogue to the bagpipe by way of explanation, whereas in reality the bagpipe is the instrument constructed on the pattern of the .natural organ, the larynx

O Mufadhdhal! The organs of speech here portrayed suffice for a correct reproduction of the letters. There are, however, other functions allotted to these. The larynx, for instance, is so fashioned as to admit fresh air into the lungs to supply the .blood and heart, which if it fails even for a moment causes death

The tongue is forged as to distinguish between the varied tastes of foods one from the other – the sweet from the sour, the purely sour from the sweetish sour, the salty from the sweet. The tongue also helps to feel the pleasantness of water and food. The teeth masticate the food to make it soft enough for easy digestion. They also hinder the lips from being sucked into the mouth. A person who has lost his, teeth is seen to have loosely moving lips. The lips help to suck in

water, so as to allow only calculated quantity of water to enter the stomach as required, not gurgling down of its own accord and producing suffocation in the throat or leading to some sort of internal inflammation by virtue of its forceful flow. .Moreover, the two lips serve as a door to keep the mouth shut at will

O Mufadhdhal! We have explained to you the multifarious functions performed by them and the benefits accruing from them, just as the same tool may serve different purposes; for instance, the axe may be used by a carpenter and may also be used for .digging the earth and for other purposes

If you look at the brain, you will find it wrapped up in membranes one upon the other to protect it from injuries and movement. The skull protects it as a helmet against being shattered to pieces by a knock or percussion on the head. The skull is covered with hair like a fleecy covering, safeguarding it against hot and cold. Who, then, except Allah the Almighty endowed the brain with such security and protection, and who made it the fountain of sense perception and who made the arrangements for its extraordinary protection in comparison with all other parts of the body because of its ?important status to the body

O Mufadhdhal! Just consider the eyelid – how it is fashioned as a screen for the eye with the eyelashes like tile strings for raising and lowering the screen. Just notice how the eyeball is set in a cavity

.shaded by the screen and hair

O Mufadhdhal, who has concealed the heart within the breast and covered it with a screen which you may call the membrane? Who has arranged for its protection by means of the ribs, the muscles and flesh interwoven in such a way as to prevent anything getting to it to cause an abrasion? Who has shaped two holes in the throat; one for the production of the sound situated in proximity with the lungs and the other called the gullet leading to the stomach for the entry of the food, and who has placed a flap, the epiglottis, over the hole leading to the larynx, to prevent food from entering the lungs, which would cause death if not thus managed? Who has caused the lungs to fan air to the heart indefatigably without rest to remove the toxins that would ?destroy it otherwise

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Who has shaped the sphincters controlling the outlets of urine and stool, like the strings of a purse to be opened or shut at will and not to drip all the while automatically causing a persistent nuisance in life? Similarly there are matters which a computer may compute, but others which men have no knowledge of are beyond computation. Who has given such resilience to the muscles of the stomach that it has been commissioned to digest coarse foods? And who has made the liver soft and tender to accept nutriment in purified and rectified form and function more finely than the stomach? Can all these tasks

be completed by any one except the Omnipotent Almighty? Can you imagine that all this can be performed by inert nature? Certainly not! All this is the planning of the Almighty, Omniscient Designer, Who has the fullest knowledge and has perfect .omnipotence in advance of creation. He is Allah, the All Knowing, Almighty

O Mufadhdhal! Consider why the tender marrow is kept protected inside bone tubes – just for the sake of protecting it from going to waste under the influence of the sun’s .heat which might melt it, or that of cold which might solidify it, which would blast life

And why is this circulation of blood confined to within the blood vessels, except that it should function inside the body and not flow out? Why are these nails fixed on fingers, except that they afford protection against damage and help in better efficiency, for without them the presence of flesh alone would not have enabled man to pick up ?things with a pinch, to use a pen for writing or to thread a needle

Why is the inside of the ear made spiralled as a prison…house, except that the sounds may be carded to the membrane for detection without damage thereto by the ?violence of air impact

Why flesh is woven over man’s thighs and buttocks, except that he may not be in… convenienced by the hardness of the floor in sitting, as is the case of a person of thin, emaciated constitution unless something intervenes between him and the floor to tone down in hardness like a

?cushion or a sofa

Who has created the human race as man and woman? Surely He Who ordained the race to flourish by the method of the union of the two sexes or at least to maintain its numerical strength, through the differentiation of the two sexes. And who made him .the progenitor of a generation? Surely He Who implanted hope in him

Who gave him the organs for action? Surely He Who made him a worker. And who made him a worker? Surely He Who created him needy. Man would not have worked if he had no need to fulfil. If he did not need to satisfy his hunger, why should he have laboured, why should he have taken to business and industry? Had he no need to safeguard his body against heat and cold, why should he have learnt sewing, needle…manufacturing, spinning, weaving, cotton growing, etc. And in the absence of all this, of what use would have been the organs of action and the fingers? And who created him needy? Surely He Who created for him the factors of neediness. And who created for him the factors of neediness? Surely He Who took upon Himself the responsibility of supplying the needs. Who endowed him with intellect? Surely He Who made reward and chastisement as essential for him. He would not need intellect if he were not responsible for reward and punishment. The Almighty Creator endowed him with intellect to distinguish between good and evil, having decided upon reward and punishment as essential for him

to get the reward for goodness and chastisement for evil. The animals, which are not subject to reward or punishment, have no sense of good and evil, nor do they know the distinction between the forbidden and the lawful, the condemned and the approved types of action. They recognise however, the factors needed by them for .the survival of their species or individuality

Who has endowed him with strategy and percipience? Surely He Who has gifted him with energy. And who has gifted man with energy? Surely He Who ordained .justification of conduct on him

O Mufadhdhal! Just consider what I have explained to you. Can there be such orderliness and method in the absence of planning? Certainly not! Allah the Almighty is .far exalted above what those people say

O Mufadhdhal! Now I describe the heart to you. Know that it has holes directed towards the holes that are in the lung to refresh the heart and if these holes are different from each other, refreshments will not reach the heart and then man will perish. Is it possible for a sane, reasonable one to claim that such a thing is done in ?ignorance? Does he not find evidence in himself to prevent him from such a claim

Suppose you found one shutter of a door having a latch fixed to it, can you imagine it to have been fixed without any purpose? Surely you will conclude that it is there to be joined to the other shutter for a definite advantage. Similarly you will find a male

creature as one individual of a pair created for a female individual so they can unite to .preserve the race

May Allah destroy those who claim to be philosophers but are so purblind in their ap-proach to such wonders of creation and constitution that they deny in the creation of .the universe the design of the Almighty Designer and the will of the Master Planner

If the genital of man were relaxed, how would it reach the bottom of the woman's womb in order to empty the sperm? And if it were hard and erect for always, then how would man turn about in the bed or walk among people with something erect before him? Then, besides it would be ugly, it would provoke sexual lust in men and women all the time. Therefore, Allah the Almighty has made it invisible to the sights most of the time and made it no burden on men. Allah has made it to be erect at the .time of need to preserve the human race

O Mufadhdhal! See with receptive eyes the great boon of Allah, the Almighty, in the relief of trouble after taking in food and drink. Is it not an elegance of plan in the construction of a house that the lavatory should be in a secluded part thereof? In the same way, Allah the Almighty has made the orifice for the excreta of man in a secret place. It is not in the open nor has it prominence, but it is so situated as to be perfectly

hidden by the junction of the thighs and the buttocks with their fleshly matter. When a man needs to answer the call of nature and assumes the requisite posture of sitting, the orifice allows the excreta to escape. Exalted be Allah Whose signs and blessings !can never be counted

O Mufadhdhal! Just consider the teeth set in the mouth of man. Some are sharp, which incise and sunder the food. Others are flat, which chew and pulverize. Since .both types, are required so man is supplied with them accordingly

Just consider and appreciate the ingenuity underlying why it is proper to have the hair cut and the nails clipped. They grow and increase and need to be clipped. As such they are devoid of sensation in order to not cause pain to man. In case the clipping causes pain, they would either be left to grow inordinately and become burdensome or pain ’.would come out of clipping

Al-Mufadhdhal said, ‘Sir! Why were they not designed so as to not thrive to an extent ’?that their clipping would be necessary

Imam as-Sadiq (A.S) said, ‘There are, indeed, numberless boons of Allah the Almighty to his creatures that are unknown to them and which if they knew them, they would be grateful for. Know that the troubles and ailments of the body are relieved through the hair coming out of the pores. (Vapours and sweat are excluded through these pores.) The fingers get relief of their ailments through the nails. That is why a weekly clipping of nails, shaving of head

and removing of redundant hair must be effected, so that the nails and the hair should grow fast and relieve ailments and troubles. Ailments remain confined in the body .otherwise with consequent pains and diseases

No hair growth is allowed on parts of the body where they would harm man. If hair grew inside the eyes, man would be blinded. If hair grew inside the mouth, man would suffer too much with his food and drink. If hair grew on the palms of hands, it would cause man some difficulties with the sense of touching and make it difficult for man to .do some tasks

There is great ingenuity underlying keeping certain spots of the body hairless. This is not only with man but also with animals. You see that their entire bodies are covered with hair, with the exception of particular parts for the same reasons. So consider this affair of creation and see how error and harm have been avoided while rectitude and .benefit have been secured

When the followers of Mani and their likes tried to impugn the belief in purposeful creation (of the universe), they found fault with the growth of hair on the pubis and the armpits. They failed to grasp that such growth was due to the moisture flowing to those parts. The hair grows there just as grass grows at places where water collects. ?Don't you see how these spots are prepared to collect waste products and hold them

Yet another strategy underlying this is that it renders one more discomfort to

man, regarding his body, and, as long as he is kept busy with the cleanliness of his body and the removal of his hair, he is prevented from perpetrating acts of greed, .cruelty, conceit and impudence for which he may not get the opportunity

Just consider the saliva in the mouth and see the wisdom underlying it. It is so composed as to ensure constant flow to keep the throat and the palate moist, to not allow dryness that may lead to death therein. Without it, food would not be chewed .nor would it flow down

Some ignorant debaters and half…witted claimants to philosophy, because of their deficient understanding and faulty knowledge, have said: It would have been better if the belly of man had been like a cloak to enable the physician to open it at will, observe its contents and poke his hand inside for medical treatment, and not as it is walled in, mysteriously hidden from the reach of the eyes and the hands. The internal disorders can now only be gauged by delicate symptoms of the examination of urine, pulse etc., which are not above error and doubt to an extent that such error in pulse and urine examination may lead to death. Would that these ignorant claimants to philosophy and polemics had known that it would have removed all apprehension of disease and death. (Any attack of disease would then have been met successfully by a reopening of the cloak…like belly, learning the exact cause and its removal). Man would then have

been infatuated with his eternality and healthfulness, which would have rendered him wilful and conceited. The open belly would have allowed constant trickling of moisture, thus spoiling his seat, bed and nice dresses. In short, it disturbs his whole .living under such circumstances

The stomach, the liver and the heart function properly because of the vital heat, which would have been disturbed by the influence of the outside air acting through the belly under treatment, open to the reach of the eye and the hand. This would .cause death

Don't you see that all hypotheses aside of the real nature of creation and constitution ?are far…fetched and preposterous

Activities of man

Just consider, O Mufadhdhal, the matters of feeding, resting and sex, which are ordained for man and the expediencies underlying them. Each one of them is propelled by an urge, which gives rise to a desire and a consequent excitation. Hunger demands food which supplies life and energy to the body and its substance. Sleep demands rest for the recuperation of the body to remove the fatigue. If man were to take food just for the needs of his body without an urge from within forcing him to feed, it is possible that he might have given way to indolence because of lassitude or pressure, his body would have been emaciated leading to death, just as a man puts off taking medicine which he only needs to improve his tone. And this may cause .death

Similarly he may put off sleep, which his body and organs need, by being busy

.with other things and thereby emaciate his body

If procreation were the sole aim of sexual union, (with no natural impulsive insistence), it would not have been improbable on man's part to slacken with resulting decrease in population and final extinction, for there are people who have no desire for progeny nor any heed therefore. Behold, then, that every act concerning man's health and improvement has been reinforced by an insistent urge embedded in his .nature prompting him thereto

:And know that there are four faculties in man

.The affinitive faculty that accepts the food and pushes it into the stomach .۱

.The retentive faculty that retains it for the natural processes to act thereon .۲

The assimilative faculty that processes it to take out its extract for distribution to .۳ .the body

The eliminative faculty that eliminates the waste products after the assimilative .۴ .faculty has completed its function

Just consider the adjustment made in the body among these four facilities. They have been organised to meet the bodily needs as part of the Omniscient design. (Any deficiency in any one of these faculties would disturb the body economy with ultimate death). Without the affinitive faculty, how would man exert after food which is necessary for the upkeep and maintenance of his body? Without the retentive faculty, how could the food be retained in the stomach to be digested? Without the assimilative faculty, how could the food be processed to get the extract to supply the body without disturbance? And without the eliminative faculty how could the waste products, given off

?by the stomach, be eliminated regularly

Don't you see how the Almighty Allah has ordained and appointed the faculties for the functions conditioning the health of the body by His Consummate Skill and Supreme ?Will

Let us illustrate it by an example. Imagine the body to be a royal palace, with servants and attendants residing therein. There are employees engaged in its management. One of them is entrusted with the task of supplying provisions to the attendants. The second is charged with the task of treasuring it until it (the food) is treated and prepared. A third has to process it and distribute it. The fourth sweeps the waste .products left over

The monarch of the palace is the Omniscient Creator Almighty, the Lord of the entire universe. The palace is the body and the dependents are the organs of the body, .while the employees are the four faculties

O Mufadhdhal, you may, perhaps, consider the explanation given by me concerning the four faculties and their functions as redundant and unnecessary. Yet my explanation does not follow the pattern of the books given by the physicians, nor does the tenor of my talk follow theirs. Those people have made mention of the four faculties on the ground that it is needed in the medical art for healing. We mention it from the viewpoint of its need for invigorating the Faith and reformation of the recusant minds, hence my comprehensive explanation and exemplification illustrating .the Omniscient design

Mental powers

O Mufadhdhal, reflect over the faculties embedded in the human psyche and the

way they are organised – namely, deliberation, superstition, reason, memory, etc. What would be a man's plight if he was deprived of the faculty of memory, and how much would his life’s affairs be disturbed, as well as his economic affairs and his business? He would not remember what other people owed him and what he owed to others, what bargains he made, what he heard and what he said. He would not .remember who did him good or evil, what profited him and what harmed him

He would not remember the path traversed by him numberless times (because of the absence of the faculty of memory). He would not remember anything even if he continued to learn a science all his life, nor would determine upon a belief or faith, nor could he profit by experience, nor could he compare one thing with another by analogy (not remembering his previous observation). In fact, he would be outside the .pale of humanity altogether

O Mufadhdhal! Just see how profitable these faculties are to man. Deliberate on one and on the place it occupies in our lives (without this faculty of memory, hundreds of .(shortcomings would result in man’s affairs, ultimately rendering him tired of life

Forgetfulness

Even a greater boon than memory is forgetfulness without which man would not find solace in any affliction, nor would he get clear of frustration, nor would he be rid of malice. (It is this forgetfulness which makes man free from the sting of his past afflictions and frustrations; he forgets malice

and enters into companionship). He would fail to relish anything of the world's goods because of persistent memories of affliction. Nor could he ever entertain any hope of the sovereign's indifference or the envy of the envious. (The thought of his sovereign's hauling him up for some transgression ever and anon would continue to embitter his life; in the same way the idea of the envy of the envious would continue to pain him and embitter his life).

Don't you see how the contrary facilities of memory and forgetfulness have been created in man, each ordained with a definite purpose (can such ingenuities come into being without being planned by the Omniscient)?

And those people who believe in two opposite creators of all the universe cannot in any case be expected to regard those two opposite entities as the creators of these two opposite faculties, for these two opposite faculties possess the benefits which you see accruing from them (whereas the creator of evil cannot create but evil and vice according to them, here both opposing facilities lead to benefit; how then can the creator of evil create either of them?).

Modesty

O Mufadhdhal! Just consider the quality with which man alone is endowed and which no other creature shares with him – that is modesty. Without it no one would show hospitality to a guest, nor would anyone implement his promise, nor would anyone's needs be fulfilled, nor would any goodness be achieved. There are many obligations which are performed merely through modesty. He who gives up

modesty concedes neither the rights of his parents nor the obligations of consanguinity, neither honours his trust nor avoids impudence. Don't you see how all these have been endowed in man so fully as to benefit him and to help him ?accomplish his affairs

Speaking and writing

O Mufadhdhal, consider the blessing of speech, with which man has been endowed by Allah the Almighty, which is the medium for the expression of his inner thoughts and his cordial feelings springing from his cogitation and with which he also understands the inner feelings of others. Without this faculty, man would be like quadrupeds: neither able to convey his own inner thoughts to others, nor able to understand the words of the speakers. Thence is the case with the art of writing which is a means for knowing the histories of the bygone people and for transmitting those of the existing people for the generations to come. Through this art, achievements of science and literature are preserved in books for ages. Through this art, the discussions and accounts between one man and another are preserved. Without this art of writing, one age would have been completely cut off from another, nor would any news have been received from those who are away from their native lands. Sciences too would have been extinct. Information on morality and etiquette would have been lost, and a serious damage in the affairs of mankind would have ensued as well as in the religious teachings and the traditions, which people need to know and the

.(knowledge whereof would have been impossible (and yet essential for man

You may, perhaps, think that this need has been fulfilled by man with the help of his own design and intelligence. It is not inherent in the nature of man. The same is the case of speech and language, for this too is a matter of terminology and resolution, determined by the people according to their mutual understanding of talk. That is why different groups have different languages and scripts, for instance, the Arabic, the Syriac, the Hebrew, the Roman, etc., each of which is different from the other, each .having decided upon its own terminology of language and words

For him who makes such a claim (as to what has been the divine share in this purely human activity), the answer will be that though in both these matters man's planning and action have played a role, yet the underlying means therein whereby his planning and action achieve the goal is a gift from the bounty of Allah the Almighty (for instance, the intellect or the tongue by means of which he attained the skill to establish the terminology). Supposing he had not been gifted with the tongue for speech or the intellect had not been bestowed on him to guide him to such an activity, he would never have been able to talk and if he had not been blessed with the palm .and the fingers, it would never have been possible for him to write

You should learn a lesson from the animals in

this behalf, which have neither the power to speak nor the power to write (being without the specific intellect or the instruments of writing). As such, it is the principle laid down by the Almighty Creator for man's fundamental nature and a special boon, for which whoever is grateful shall get the heavenly reward, while whoever denies it will be ignored, for Allah the Almighty is independent of the whole universe. (He does not need anybody's gratitude).

Knowledge given to man

O Mufadhdhal! Consider the matters of which knowledge has been vouchsafed to man and those of which he has not been given the knowledge. He has been vouchsafed the knowledge of all those matters that lead to his good in respect to Faith as well as his earthly life. The Gnosis of Allah, the Almighty Creator, is attainable by means of the arguments and evidence available in the existence of the creation. So is the knowledge of matters that are obligatory on man, for instance, justice towards all human beings, kindness to parents, returning of trusts to their owners, sympathy towards the downtrodden, etc., the knowledge and admission of which all nations possess naturally as a matter of fact, whether in agreement with us or against us. Man has been given the knowledge of those things which are beneficial to his worldly life, for example agriculture, horticulture, cattle farming, drawing water from wells and springs, herbal research for medical purposes, mining for different kinds of precious stones, diving in the sea, different kinds of planning for hunting animals

and birds, fishing, industry, trade and business and many other things which need a long detail, wherein lies the fulfilment of the affairs of man's worldly life, the betterment of his religious and mundane affairs. Such knowledge is made available to him as it is in his best interests. Matters whose knowledge is out of his reach nor does his position demand it are not made known to him; for example, the knowledge of the unseen, of matters that are to happen in the future or some of the affairs that have happened in the past, those pertaining to what lies above the skies, under the earth, what lies in the oceans and in the vast expanse of the universe, or within the minds of people, the contents of the uterus, etc. People who have claimed knowledge thereof, their claims were stultified by the events that took place later on and were contrari… .(wise. (The events that followed were contrary to what they had reported

So just see O Mufadhdhal, that the knowledge of things given to man is essential for his worldly and religious affairs. He has been prevented from knowing unnecessary things to impress him with his worth and his deficiency (so that it may be known that man is in fact an insignificant mote possessing a good deal of deficiency and .(weakness so that pride and conceit may not overtake him from any side

Knowledge hidden from man

Oh Mufadhdhal! Just consider why man has not been given the knowledge of his life span. If he knew the

period of his life on the earth to be short, his whole life would have been embittered, for, knowing this, he would await the moment of his death. His condition would be like a man whose assets have all been lost or are very soon to be lost. And he might feel his poverty and neediness. How afraid he would be at the expectation of the destruction of his assets and the consequent indigence! The sorrow and chagrin he would feel at the prospect of death would be far greater than that at the prospect of the destruction of his property, for he who loses his property ever entertains the hope that he might get more in return and that provides solace to his mind. On the contrary, he who is convinced of the end of his life will be much more frustrated. In case he has a long life span to live, this confidence in his survival will give him undue confidence. He might be overwhelmed by pleasures and debaucheries under the impression that he would offer penitence in the last days of life, lingering for the present in his pleasure pursuits. This is a matter which Allah the Almighty does not want nor likes in his creatures. (He wants man to attend to Him and to not be absorbed in frivolities and .(novelties

Suppose you have a servant who continues to offend you throughout the year and hopes to be pardoned by doing you good in a day or a month. Surely you would

not like him and this servant will not rank with a righteous servant who is ever ready .(to follow your bidding. (He will necessarily be dearer to you

You may raise an objection to this by asking whether it does not happen that a man treads the path of disobedience and then is penitent, and his penitence is accepted. Our reply to this is that this happens only when a man is overpowered by his libido to an irresistible extent, but all the time he is not determined to be disobedient under the impression of expressing penitence later on while indulging in passions for the moment. Allah the Almighty does forgive him out of His infinite mercy. But in the case of one who is determined to be disobedient as long as he wants, expecting forgiveness at a later stage, he is trying thereby to deceive Him Who cannot be deceived, thinking of getting the most out of the pleasures of the moment while expecting to be forgiven because of his later penitence. There is this aspect of the matter, too, that persisting in a certain pattern of life of indulgence in pleasures might not allow him even the occasion for penitence, particularly in the old age when the physical body has undergone a good deal of weakness preventing him from working up to his expectations. And he who seeks pretexts in submitting his penitence, it may not be possible for him in case of a sudden death and so he may leave the world .impenitent

He may be like a debtor who is competent to pay his debts but keeps delaying from time to time till death overtakes him, his assets get destroyed and his debts still stand against him. As such it is in the fitness of things that the knowledge of man's life span is kept a secret from him so that he may expect death to come at any moment and, under that suspense, evade transgression and adopt righteous action.

You may raise another objection by saying that since his life span is a secret from him and he is ever in suspense about his death, he commits evil deeds and unlawful acts. Our reply to this is that the planning is in accordance with the situation prevailing now. If in spite of all this, a man does not refrain from evil, it is a sign of his temperamental perversion and his hardheartedness. There is no error in the planning if a patient after being fully apprised of the benefits of certain medicines and the demerits of certain malevolent matters does not avail of this information and disregards the physician's directions; the physician is not to be blamed but the patient who declined to follow the physician's directions.

If in spite of the suspense of his death, which he has because of his ignorance about his life span, he does not desist from transgressions, he would be steeped in evil and heinous unreasonable sins, like the case in which he does have full knowledge of his life span and

survival. As such, the suspense about death in any case is better for him than his confidence in long life. If there are some people who despite their suspense about death are indolent and do not profit by advice, there are others who profit by the advice, abstain from sinfulness and act righteously. They give to the needy and the indigent charity of their precious possessions. It would not have been justice to deprive this kind of people from getting the benefit thereof (to prevent such people from having their share just because others are unable to profit by it; the state of death is therefore kept secret for people to profit by it).

Dreams

Oh Mufadhdhal! Just consider the dreams (one sees in sleep) and the ingenuity underlying them. There are dreams that come true and dreams that do not come true and are all mixed up. If all dreams were true, all men would have been prophets, and if all dreams were untrue, they would have been useless, rather redundant and meaningless. The dreams are sometimes true to benefit a person in his life's affairs, under their guidance, or to avoid loss of which he is informed thereby. They are mostly untrue lest man may come to depend on them.

Everything to serve man

Oh Mufadhdhal! Just consider those things which you see present in the world, supplied to meet human needs. The earth to build houses, iron for industry, wood for building boats and other things, stone for grindstones and other things, copper for utensils, gold and silver for business transactions, gems for treasure, corns, fruits and meat for food, fragrant articles for pleasure, medicines to heal the sick, quadrupeds as beasts of burden, dry wood as fuel, ashes for chemicals, sand for the benefit of the earth ... and how can one count all these things which are numberless?!

Oh Mufadhdhal! Do you think that if a man enters a house and sees it supplied with all human needs, the whole house full of treasures and every thing placed with a definite purpose, can he imagine that all those things have been arranged by themselves without anyone to plan that? Then how can any rational being suggest that this world and

?(all its contents have come into being by themselves (without the Creator

Oh Mufadhdhal! Learn a lesson from the things that have been created to meet human needs and the great ingenuity underlying them. Corn has been produced for him but he has been entrusted with the duty of grinding, kneading and cooking. Wool has been produced for him but he must gin, spin and weave it. The tree is made for him but he must sow the seed, irrigate and look after it. The herbs have been created as medicines for him but he must find them, mix them and compound them. Similarly you will find all things made by the Creator in this way. The need and the situation for it have been left to him in his own interest. If the Almighty Allah had performed all these activities for him and he had nothing to do by way of his activity, he would have begun to move on the earth and the earth would not have been able to bear his burden, such would have been the extent of his temperamental conceit. This would have led him to indulge in such activities that would lead to his death and destruction. Man would not have had a happy life if all his needs had been fulfilled without effort of hand, nor would he have enjoyed such a thing. (A thing that man obtains without effort is not valued, nor is it spiritually relished; if it is gained by effort and labour, the mind feels

.(satisfied with the result of man's effort

Oh Mufadhdhal! Don't you see that a guest who stays for a time with all his needs ful- filled by his host steadily, without any effort on his part to secure eatables, drink, bed- ding or seating, gets tired of his idleness and inactivity? He seeks some engagement. What would have been his condition if his inactivity were lifelong? This then is ordained for man to occupy his limbs to transact his business in his own interest, lest idleness and inactivity cause him ennui. Moreover, he should be prevented from such undertakings as are outside his capacity, and which have no advantage for him even .if completed

Bread and water

Oh Mufadhdhal! Know that a man's basic need is for food and water. See the planning that has gone therein. Man needs water more than bread, because he can bear hunger longer than thirst. He needs water for drinking, for ablution, washing clothes, giving water to quadrupeds, and irrigating crops. Water, therefore, is provided in abundance without need of purchase to save man the need of searching for it. Bread must be obtained with effort and planning to keep man busy with his occupation and to hinder him from pride and conceit and useless undertakings. Don't you see that a child in early age is sent to a teacher for instruction to keep him away from playing away all his time which may lead him or his kin to trouble? In the same way, if man were left unoccupied, he would be proud and

self-conceited and would indulge in actions likely to harm him grievously. One, who is born and nurtured in the lap of luxury under the conditions of opulence and plenty of .his kinsfolk, is likely to fall into such conduct

People unlike one another

Know why one man does not resemble another as the birds and animals and other things do. You see a herd of deer and a swarm of partridges each resembling the other with not much difference among them, whereas men, as you see, have distinct .features and constitutions so much so that no two men correspond to each other

The reason is the need each individual has to be recognised personally by his particular build and physiognomy, as they have to conduct business amongst themselves that does not concern the animals. Don't you see that the mutual resemblance among animals and birds does them no harm? But it is not so in man, for if by chance a pair of twins becomes alike in shape, people feel a great deal of confusion in dealing with them. What must be given to one is handed to the other by mistake. One is held up in place of the other in retribution. It so happens in other matters as well because of resemblance. Human resemblance can be even more harmful. Who then has provided such niceties and perfections, which stagger imagination? Surely, it is He Who has created all these creatures, Whose grace .extends to all things

Oh Mufadhdhal! Will you believe a person who says that a picture on

the wall has come into being by itself without the aid of an artist? Certainly not! You will laugh at him. How then can you believe that a living man with faculties of speech and movement can come into being by himself? Surely you will mock at that. How then can you deny this concerning a lifeless picture on a wall but you do not deny it ?concerning the living and speaking man

Growth of animals

Why do the bodies of animals, which always feed, not grow above certain sizes, rather their bodies stop increasing once they reach their normal sizes? To what is this ?due if not to deep percipience and wise planning

The Almighty Allah has so ordained that each species of living beings should have a definite limit of growth – neither larger nor smaller. They continue to increase up to that limit and then stop growing, even though feeding continues. If it were not so ordained, they would continue to grow till their bodies would grow out of recognisable .limits

Pain

Why is it in the case of human beings in particular that movement and activity cause fatigue in them and they avoid fine industries? It is just because that his needs like clothing, sleeping and other things require more exertion. If man does not suffer hardness and pain, how can he evade evil deeds, prostrate before Allah or have pity ?for people

Don't you see that when man is inflicted with pain, he turns to Allah humbly and submissively, supplicating to his Lord to restore his health and giving charity open-handedly? If man felt no pain when beaten, how would the rulers punish the recusants and subject the mutinous and disobedient? How would children be taught sciences and arts? How would slaves be made to submit to their masters willingly? Is there no admonition in all this for Ibn Abul Awja' (the said atheist) and his companions who deny purpose and for the followers of Mani who deny the

?ingenuity underlying labour and pain

If just males or just females had been created in living beings, would not the species become extinct? It is thus to preserve their species that both males and females have .been brought into being in the right proportion

Growth of hair

Why is it that when men and women reach puberty, men alone grow a beard? Is it not because of the wise management? This is because man is created as the lord and woman as housekeeper. The woman is the supervisor of man's interests and his sweetheart. Man, as such, is bestowed with a beard to give him prestige and an honourable lordly appearance. The woman is allowed beauty and freshness instead as attractions for union. Don't you see the flawless merits that this creation acquires by the design of the Almighty Allah? Every thing is according to a definite measure. '.Nothing is given that is not needed

Mufadhdhal says, 'It was now afternoon, my master rose for prayers telling me to come to him the next day, Allah willing. Overjoyed with the information received, I returned with a grateful heart for Allah for the boon bestowed on me. I had a very "'.pleasant night due to the valuable instructions bestowed on me by my master

The Second Meeting

explainment

Mufadhdhal says, "At dawn, I hastened early to my master and after being permitted ,to come in, he asked me to sit down. He said

All praise is due to Allah, the Manager of all things and the Repeater of the ages; a' stage after a stage and a world after a world to reward the righteous and to chastise the evildoers due to what they have done out of His justice. All His Names are exalted. ,His blessings are magnificent. He does not do the least injustice to His creatures

but man himself does injustice to himself. His saying confirms that, (Then he who hath done an atom's weight of good shall see it, and he who hath done an atom's weight of evil shall see it).([۴]) There are other verses in the Holy Book to this same effect giving detailed explanations of all matters. Falsehood cannot come in front of nor behind it. It is a Book revealed by the Almighty Praiseworthy Allah. It is on this account that the Holy Prophet (S.A.) has said, "It is your actions that will be returned to you (reward and chastisement are just the consequences of actions, which you will receive; they do not benefit Allah, rather you yourself will be the beneficiary)."'

Imam as-Sadiq (a.s) bent down his head for a while and said, 'O Mufadhdhal, people are perplexed and bewildered, blind, infatuated moving in their perverseness, following their devils and spectres. They have eyes but they do not see, they have tongues but are dumb and do not understand. They have ears but do not hear. They are happy in their contemptible degradation. They presume that they are well-guided. They are diverted from the rank of rational beings. They feed in the fields of polluted, dirty people. (They repeat what the irrational people say, denying the Almighty Allah and setting up nature or instinct as the creator of all things). They deem themselves safe from a sudden visitation of death and the retribution of deeds. Alas! How ill-fated these people are! How frightfully prolonged their painful

sorrow will be, and how dreadful the retribution on the day when no ally will avail anyone nor will he be succoured, except those to whom Allah grants Mercy (on the day of Resurrection).'

Al-Mufadhdhal said, 'I began crying when I heard him saying that.' Imam as-Sadiq (s) said, 'Do not cry! You have been saved where you have believed and you have been delivered where you have known.'

Animal structure

Imam as-Sadiq (s) continued, 'Now, I will talk to you about the animal kingdom that you may have as much information thereabout as you have received about the rest. Just consider the physical constitution and the pattern of construction underlying animals' builds. They are not hard as stone, for had they been so, they could not bend to perform actions, nor are they soft, for in that case they could not rear up their heads or stand erect by themselves without any prop. They are composed of such pliable muscles to bend, supported by hard bones which are gripped by the muscles and which are tied together with the others by tendons and covered by the skin which extends over the whole body. The wooden dolls with rags wound round them tied by strings and with a varnish of gum over the whole will illustrate the point. Let the wood stand for the bones, the rags for muscles, the strings for tendons and the varnish for the skin. If it is possible in the case of living and moving beings to come into existence by themselves, the

same can be said about these lifeless figures. And if it is impossible, as in the case of these toys, it is even more preposterous in the case of animals.

Then think deeply of their bodies! They are composed of muscles and bones like the human beings. They are endowed with eyes and ears, so as to enable man to obtain advantages from them. They would not have served his purpose if they had been blind and deaf. They are deprived of the faculties of intellect and reason, so that they may remain subservient to man and should not disobey even when subjected to intolerably heavy labour and burden.

One may say that man may have slaves who have intellect and reason, but they obey their masters abjectly despite hard laborious toil. The answer to this is that this kind of people (who remain obedient even under the stress of slavish toil) is few in number. Most slaves are unwilling toilers while the quadrupeds are obedient even under heavy burdens and when turning grindstones and other things. They cannot be affected by agitation as far as their particular duties to man are concerned. (Contrary to the quadrupeds, man is prone to such influence). If people were to do such labors, they would be busy all the time and may not be free to do other works and duties, for several men would be required to do the work of one camel or one mule. These simple tasks would have absorbed all man's power, without leaving any hands

spare for arts and professions. Besides that, man would suffer strain and face .troubles in achieving his living affairs

O Mufadhdhal! Just consider the constitutions of the following three kinds of living .beings, and the merits with which they are endowed

Man, having been ordained to possess intellect and reason to undertake such pro... fessions as carpentry, masonry, smithy, sewing, etc., has been endowed with broad palms and thick fingers to enable him to grasp all types of tools necessary for these .professions

The carnivorous animals, having been ordained to live on game, have been gifted with soft palms and claws to enable them to catch their preys. They are suitable for .hunting but unfit for professional arts

Herbivorous animals, having been ordained neither for professional arts nor for hunt... ing, have been gifted, some with slotted hoofs to save them from the hardness of the ground while grazing, while others have solid round hoofs to be able to stand squarely .on the ground for better fitness as beasts of burden

Carnivorous animals in their constitutional composition have sharp fangs, hard claws and wide mouths to serve them in their nutrition on meat so that they are constituted accordingly. They have been armed with such tools and implements to serve them in hunting. And you see that birds have beaks and claws to help them in their particular .tasks

If such claws were given to non-hunting animals, they would have been worse than useless; for they neither hunt nor eat flesh. And if the carnivorous animals were given hoofs instead of claws, they

would have failed to secure their necessities. Don’t you see that all these kinds of animals are gifted with exactly the things appropriately in consonance with their ?needs to maintain their survival

Now, look at the quadrupeds – how they follow their mothers. They neither need to be carried nor to be nurtured as is the case with human babies. This is so because the mothers of those young ones do not posses the tools which human mothers have. Human mothers possess kindness, love and the knowledge of the art of nurture with specialised hands and fingers to lift them. They are so constituted as to help .themselves in all manner of work

You see the same thing in birds, for example the young hens, partridges and grouse, that they begin to pick up corn and move about as soon as they are hatched from eggs. Birds whose young ones are weak, without the strength to stand, such as the wild and domestic pigeons, have mothers with extra maternal instincts so that they can bring to their young ones’ mouths nourishment garnered by them in their crops. Such feedings continue till the chicks can fend for themselves. Pigeons don’t have a large brood like hens to enable the females to rear them up adequately without starving them. Every one thus receives a due share from the bounty of the Almighty .Omniscient Allah

Just look at the legs of the animals! They have been created in pairs to enable them to move easily, which would have been difficult had

they been created in odd numbers. A moving animal lifts up some of its feet while resting on the others. Bipeds lift one and are supported by the other. Quadrupeds lift one pair and rest on the other on the opposite side. If quadrupeds lift the pair of legs on the same side, and depend on the other pair for support on the other side, they grope and cannot standstill on the ground, like a bed and the likes. The front leg of the right side and the hind leg of the left side are lifted together and vice versa for steady .movement

Animals submit to man

Do you not see how a donkey submits to the grindstone and burdens, seeing that the horse is allowed to have rest and comfort? Do you not see how a camel can be led by a little boy though it cannot be controlled by several men if it becomes stubborn? How does a strong ox submit to his master when ploughing the fields with the yoke on its neck? A bred horse rushes towards sword blades and spears like its master. A single person is able to look after a flock of sheep. If the sheep go astray, each one on its own way, how can one control them? The same is said about the other species of animals that are subservient to man. Why is that? It is simply because they have no intellect and no power to reason out matters. Had they possessed intellect, they would have shirked to implement

a good deal of man’s requirements. The camel would decline to submit, the bullock would mutiny against his master, the sheep would scatter and so on. If the beasts of prey had intellect and reason and gathered together against people, they could defeat them. Can man stand against lions, tigers, wolves, bears and other beasts if ?they attack together

Don’t you see how they have been deprived of that, and instead of man fearing them, they themselves fear man and avoid the abodes of people? They do not come out to search for food but at night. They fear man submissively; otherwise, they would .attack man in his home and trouble his life

Kindness of dogs

The dog, amongst the beasts, is endowed with a special loyalty to its master, his service and safeguard. It keeps watch during dark nights, roaming about the premises, safeguarding against burglars. It is ready to sacrifice its life to save its master, his properties and his flocks. It becomes wholly accustomed to its master. It can put up with hunger and pain for its master’s sake. Why has dog been created on this pattern, except that it should serve to guard man, with its strong teeth, stout claws, and frightening bark to frighten burglars and to prevent them from ?approaching the places that it watches and guards

Organs of beasts

O Mufadhdhal! Look at the faces of the quadrupeds, how they are shaped. You will see that they have their eyes accommodated in the front, lest they strike a wall or fall in a pit. You will find their mouths cleft under the snout. If they were like those of men, animals would not be able to pick up anything from the ground. Don’t you see that man does not pick up his food with his mouth? He does so with his hands. This is a peculiar merit granted to man in comparison with other feeders. Since the quadrupeds do not possess such hands to enable them to pick up grass, the under part of the snout has been cleft to enable them to pick up grass and chew it. The mouth of quadrupeds is further helped with lengthened lips to reach out to farther as well as

.closer things

Consider the tails of animals and the benefit ordained therein. It is a sort of covering for their excretory privities. It also helps them ward off flies and mosquitoes that settle on the dirt on their bodies. Their tails are patterned after fans with which they drive away flies and mosquitoes. They also get relief from constantly wagging their .tails

These animals stand on all fours. They have no occasion to move about and therefore feel relieved by wagging their tails. There are other benefits as well which human imagination is incapable of grasping which are known only when the need arises. Among these benefits is that the tail is the handiest weapon to extricate when the dog .gets stuck in the mud. The tail hair may also be of advantage to man

The trunk of such animals is made flat when lying on all four legs to facilitate riding and copulation because of the situation of the relevant parts ... and if the private parts of the female quadrupeds were under their abdomens like those in woman, the males .would not be able to copulate with them

Consider the trunk of an elephant and the great ingenuity in its pattern. With its trunk, it takes in food and water to the stomach, like the human hand. Without it the elephant cannot lift anything from the ground, since its neck is not long enough, which it may stretch forward like other quadrupeds. In the absence of a long neck the elephant has been given a long trunk

instead that it may extend it and meet its need. Who has given it an organ to compensate for the absence of a missing one? Surely, it is He Who is so very compassionate to His creatures. And how can this take place by itself without wise ?design as claimed by the perverse naturalists and atheists

If someone asks: why has it not been endowed with a neck similar to that of other animals? The reply is that the head and the ears of the elephant are very big and heavy and if they were joined to a big neck, the elephant would suffer much and be easily disabled; hence, its head has been joined directly to the body to protect it against that contingency and instead thereof the proboscis has been constructed to .serve all those purposes it needs, including those of feeding

Just consider the constitution of the giraffe and the distinct nature of its organs in that each organ is similar to that of other animals. Its head is like that of a horse, its neck is like that of a camel, its hooves are like those of a cow and its skin is like that of a leopard. Some ignorant people have supposed that it results from the union of several kinds of animals. These ignoramuses say that the males of different species of land animals when coming to the watering places copulate with the females of other species who then give such offspring that are a composite of different species. This is

out of ignorance and lack of the gnosis of the Almighty Allah, glory be to Him. No animal enters into sexual union with animals of other species. No union takes place between a horse and a she…camel or a camel and a cow. Sexual union can take place only between animals of similar constitutional shape; for example between a horse and a she…ass that gives a mule or a wolf with a hyena that gives a hybrid. Moreover, it never happens that the offspring of such a union can have an organ from this and another from that. A giraffe has one organ resembling that of a horse, another that of a camel, and hooves like those of a cow. But you see that a mule has its head, ears, back, tail and hoof midway between those of a donkey and a horse. So is its cry midway between neighing and braying. This argument adequately shows that a giraffe is not the offspring of the union of disparate species, but is one wonder of the .wonderful creations of the Almighty Allah, demonstrating His Omnipotence

It should also be known that the Creator of the numberless species of animals creates the organs of whatsoever He likes. He adds to the creatures whatever He wills and curtails whatever He wills. This is so that His Omnipotence may be demonstrated and .that nothing can hinder Him in anything He wills

Why is the neck of the giraffe long and what advantages are accrued to it thereof? The advantage lies in

enabling it to reach up to the leaves and fruits of high trees for it lives and grazes in places and dense forests of high trees.

Just consider the creation of the monkey and the similarity between its organs and those of man, such as the head, the shoulders, the chest and the internal organs. Moreover it has been gifted with brain and intellect because of which it understands the signals and the directions of its master. It generally apes man's activities as it sees him. It is very close to man in its qualities, traits and constitutional build. It should serve as a lesson to man that he should bear in mind that he is so closely like an animal and if he had not been gifted with brain, intellect and speech, he would have been just like the animals.

There are certain additions in the constitution of a monkey that differentiate it from man, such as the mouth, the long tail, and the hair covering the whole body. These differences, however, would not hinder it from becoming human if it had been gifted with reason, intellect and faculties of speech like man. The real line of demarcation between it and man is due only to the faculties of reason, intellect and speech.

O Mufadhdhal! Just consider the mercifulness of Almighty Allah towards these animals in giving their bodies different coverings of hair, wool, and fur to protect them against winter hardships. They have been gifted hoofs to protect them from the harms of badlands. They have

neither hands, nor palms nor fingers to spin and weave; therefore, their clothing has been included as part of their bodily build to remain on them all their lives without .renovation or change

Man, however, possesses hands and skill to work. He spins and weaves cloths for himself and he changes his states with them. He receives many advantages from doing that. He becomes busy manufacturing his clothing and is thereby saved from harmful activities and idleness. He takes off his clothing whenever he wants and puts them on whenever he wants. He receives pleasure by putting on different kinds of beautiful dresses. He makes socks and shoes by way of fine industry to protect his feet. Labourers and traders thereby get their livelihood and the livelihood of their families. On the contrary, different kinds of hair, wool and fur serve the animals as .clothing while their hoofs are as shoes for them

Animals hide when dying

O Mufadhdhal! Just consider the constitutional trait of the animals! They hide themselves when dying just like people when they bury their deads. The carcasses of the beasts and animals are not seen. They are not so little to be overlooked. In fact .their numbers are greater than that of men

Look at the flocks of deer, addaxes, zebras, ibexes and stags and also at other different species like lions, badgers, wolves, leopards and others, and the many kinds of insects living inside the bowels of the earth and moving on its surface in the deserts ,and mountains, and birds like crows, partridges, ducks

cranes, pigeons, and birds of prey! None of their corpses do we see except the few that hunters get as games or those that are devoured by beasts. As a matter of fact, when these animals feel they are about to die, they hide themselves in some secret place and die there. Had it not been so, the earth would have been filled with .carcasses and would have been infected by epidemics and all kinds of diseases

See the arts and lessons that man has learnt from these animals! The first example is that which has been mentioned by the Almighty Allah in the story of Adam's children when Cain (Kabil) had murdered Abel (Habil). Cane saw two crows fighting, one killing the other and then burying the carcass of the killed one wherefrom Cain learnt to dig and conceal his brother's corpse. These animals have been given this instinct to save .man from the affliction of those troubles and epidemics which would result later on

Wits of animals

O fadhdhal! Consider the wits with which animals have been naturally gifted by Allah the Almighty through His infinite mercy so as not to leave any creature deprived of His compassion. The stag eats snakes but it does not drink water, however thirsty it becomes, fearing that the poison may spread in its body because of water, which may kill him. It roams about water springs and cries because of thirst but does drink water .for it dies soon

You see the great restraint that these animals have before the intense

thirst because of the fear of harm to an extent that a rational wise man would have .been unable to undertake

When the fox does not find food, it feigns death with its belly inflated to deceive birds into thinking it is dead. As soon as birds come around it to eat from the dead body, it .attacks and catches them

Who has given this skill to the speechless, irrational fox? Surely He Who has taken upon Himself the responsibility of feeding it. As the fox cannot undertake those activities, like attacking its preys, which other beasts can, it has been gifted with skill and fraud as a means of livelihood. The dolphin hunts birds. It catches a fish, kills it that it may remain floating on the water while it hides itself underneath water, stirring the water all the time to keep its own body hidden. As soon as a bird pounces upon the ’.fish, the dolphin attacks and takes hold of the bird. By this skill it gets its victim

Al-Mufadhdhal said, ‘My master! Would you please tell me about the python and the ’?cloud

Imam as-Sadiq (a.s) said, ‘The cloud snatches a python wherever it may find it, just as the magnet stone snatches a piece of iron. A python does not raise its head from the earth due to fear of the cloud except in the summertime when the sky is clear without ’.a trace of cloud

Mufadhdhal asked why the cloud had been made to overlord over the python and take it wherever it may

’.find it and Imam as-Sadiq (s) said, ‘To save men from its harms

Insects

Mufadhdhal said, ‘Sir, you have told me much about the animal kingdom so fully as to serve as a lesson to everyone. Would you please tell me about ants and birds?’

Imam as-Sadiq said (a.s), ‘O Mufadhdhal, look at the weak, little ant! Do you find any deficiency therein affecting its benefit? Where has this propriety and measure come from? It is the same ingenuity and design which has gone into the build of all creatures whether big or small. Just see how these ants gather together to garner food for themselves. You will find that when several ants want to carry a grain to their home, they resemble several men carrying food or other things. Ants, in fact, are so serious and active to an extent that even men are not. Do you not see how they help each other in carrying food as people do? They break the grains into pieces lest they would sprout and become useless to them. When the grains become moist, they take them out and spread them so they can dry. Ants burrow their holes at elevated places away from the danger of flooding. All these activities are not out of reason, but instinct with which their constitutions are endowed by the kindness of Almighty Allah.

Consider the insect called “layth”([٥]) which is called “the lion of the flies” by the public. It has been granted skill, ingenuity and mildness to secure its livelihood. You will see

that when it feels a fly approaching it, it feigns ignoring it for a while as if it is a lifeless body. When it feels that the fly feels safe and becomes ignorant of its presence, it begins moving slowly step by step till it gets near enough, to catch it and then pounces upon it and captures it. Getting it, it embraces it with its whole body to prevent its escape. It holds on till it feels that the fly has become weak and relaxed and then it .begins to eat it, and in this way it survives

The ordinary spider weaves its web and uses it as a trap to catch flies. It sits hidden within it. As soon as a fly is trapped, it pounces upon it stinging it time after time. The hunting of "the lion of flies" is like the hunting of dogs and cheetahs, while the hunting .of spiders is like that of nets and traps

Just see how this weak insect has been gifted with the instinct to catch its prey, which man cannot do without using artifice and implements. Do not despise anything, for in everything can be found a clear lesson, like ants and other creatures. A fine meaning may be found in an insignificant thing without depreciating its value just as gold is not .depreciated when weighed against iron weights

Birds

O Mufadhdhal, consider the structure of birds! When it has been ordained to fly high in the air, it has been gifted with a light body and

a comparatively compact constitution. It has only two feet instead of four, four fingers instead of five and only one orifice for excretion instead of two. It has been gifted a sharp chest to cut through the air just as a boat is built to cut through water. It has long stiff feathers on its sides and tail to help it fly high. The whole body is covered with feathers that can get filled with air for high flights. Since it has been ordained that its food will be grains and flesh that it will swallow without mastication, it has not been given teeth, and a stiff beak has been given to it instead. The beak is not injured in picking up nor broken by nibbling flesh. Since it has no teeth and it swallows grains and raw flesh, the food is ground by the means of the heat that is inside its inners which makes it in no need of mastication. It is just an example that the seeds of grapes pass out of a man's stomach intact while they are completely ground in the bird's inners. Birds have been created to lay eggs rather than to give birth to young ones so that they may not become heavy and unable to fly. If the foetuses were to stay inside the inners of birds until they were fully developed, birds would not have been able to rise or fly. Everything in its build has been created so as to be fully appropriate to its

situation in life. It has also been ordained that birds which have to fly in the air should sit for a week, two or three on the eggs until the chicks hatch out of the eggs. They then blow air into the crops of the chicks so that the crops become wide enough to receive food with which it can subsist. Who has ordered birds to pick up grains and foods and then take that food out of their crops to put it into the crops of the young ones? Why do birds bear all that burden although they have no faculty of reasoning nor do they have any expectations from their chicks like the expectations of man from his offspring to bring him honour and support and keep his name alive? This is an activity which demonstrates that it is a special boon from Almighty Allah which the bird itself does not know nor can figure out. It is an arrangement for the survival of the .race

Look at the hen! How anxious it is to lay the eggs and to bring forth the chicks although it has neither any particular nest nor have the eggs been gathered. It clucks, spreads its feathers and gives up its nourishment, unless it is given eggs to sit on and to bring forth the chicks. Why is that? It is to preserve the race. Had it not been instinctively ordained who could have obliged it to preserve the race, while it has no ?intellectual or reasoning faculty

Ponder on

the creation of the egg and the white and yellow matters in it. One part is for the chick to be constituted while the other is to serve it as its nourishment till the time when it leaves the egg. Just see the ingenuity underlying it, since the rise of the chick is to be carried on safely in the shell that nothing can enter from outside, its nourishment is provided within it which is sufficient till it comes out, like one who is imprisoned in a .closed prison and provided with enough food to suffice him till his release

Just consider the bird's crop and the ingenuity underlying it. The way of food to the gizzard is narrow and allows food to reach it only in small quantities. Without the crop, the grain would take time to reach the gizzard. The bird, out of care and fear, fills up its crop hastily. Its crop is constructed as a haversack suspended in front of it so that it may fill it up hastily with whatever it gets, and then slowly transfer it to the stomach. There is another advantage in the crop. Certain birds have to transfer food material to '.their young ones. The crop helps them to transfer it easily from a nearby place

Al-Mufadhdhal said, 'Some people of the materialistic school claim that the variegated hues and shapes of birds are merely due to the compounding of elements and humours in varied proportions. They are out of disturbance and indifference (created '.(by themselves

(Imam as-Sadiq (s

said, ‘This ornamentation which you see in the peacock or the partridge and the perfect symmetry as if some artist with a fine brush has accomplished the art of picturesqueness, how can irrational compounding bring it forth without any flaw? If these artistic models have come into being without planning, they would be imperfect .and full of differences and faults

Consider the feathers of birds! You will find them like cloth woven with fine strings. One hair is interwoven with another just as one piece of thread is interwoven with another. Look at its composition. If you open it, it opens up without being split to allow air to be filled in and to allow the bird to fly when it likes. In the middle of the feather you will find a stout stick covered with hair-like material. The stick is hollow so as to .not be a burden to the bird and hinder its flight

Have you ever seen the long-legged bird([۶]) and ever thought of the advantage in the long legs it has? It is often found in shallow water; you will find it standing on its long legs as though it were keeping watch at a watchtower. It keeps watching the movements in the water. When it finds anything edible, it slowly moves towards it and catches it. If its legs were shorter, its belly would touch the water in its movements towards its victim and it might then swell and fail to catch its victim. It has therefore been gifted with two long

.props to fulfil its need without any obstacle

Consider the creation of birds. You will find that every long…legged bird has a long neck as well to enable it to pick up its food from the ground. If a bird had long legs but a short neck, it would not be able to pick up anything from the ground. A long-legged bird, besides its long neck, might have a long beak so that it would be easier for it to get its food. Do you not see that anything you consider in the creation you will find ?exact, perfect and out of utmost wisdom

Look at sparrows and how they seek their food during the day. They do not miss it nor do they find it collected in one place but they get it through continuously moving and searching about here and there. Thus it is with all the creatures. Glory be to Allah the Almighty Who has apportioned sustenance and arranged it in different ways to be obtained. It has not been placed out of reach when the creatures need it nor has it been made to be obtained so easily without any efforts. There would be no use if sustenance were ready and at hand because animals would not leave it until they had become over-satiated, and that would lead to indigestion and perishment. People also would be so reckless and careless until corruption and vices would spread .everywhere

Do you know about the food of the birds that do not come out except at night

’?like owls and bats

’.Al-Mufadhdhal said, ‘I do not know

Imam as-Sadiq (a.s) said, ‘The food of such creatures consists of varied kinds of insects scattered in the atmosphere such as mosquitoes, butterflies, locusts and the like. Such creatures are scattered everywhere and no place is free from them. When you light up a lamp at night on the roof or in the yard, many kinds of such insects will .gather round it

Where do they come from? Surely from near about they come. If any one says that they come from the forests and deserts, he will then be asked how they can reach so near so soon and how they can see the lamp lit inside a building surrounded by many other buildings, while as a matter of fact they take no time to gather around the lamp. It is clear that these creatures are spread everywhere in the atmosphere and the .birds that come out at night feed on them

See how nourishment has been arranged for the birds that come out at night by means of such insects scattered in the atmosphere. Try to understand the purpose of the creation of such living creatures, lest some one may think that they are created in .vain without any advantage

Bats

The bat has been created in a strange shape between birds and quadrupeds. In fact, it is nearer to quadrupeds with its two protruding ears, teeth and fine hair. It bears and gives birth to its young ones. It suckles its children. It urinates and excretes. It

walks on all fours when walking. All these traits are contrary to those of birds. It comes out only at night and feeds on insects scurrying in the air. Some say it does not eat anything but lives only on cool air as nourishment. This is incorrect for two reasons: it urinates and excretes, which presuppose solid food. It has teeth and if it did not eat, the teeth would be useless, whereas there is nothing in creation that is useless. This creature (the bat) has well-known merits. Its excreta are useful in certain cases. Its strange constitution is in itself a wonder that shows the infinite powers of Allah the Almighty Who does whatever He wills for the benefit of His people .(and that He is more aware (of them than they themselves are

The weaverbird builds its nest on the trees. Sometime a big snake comes towards its nest opening its mouth to devour it. The weaverbird gets worried and looks about for a means of safety. When it finds a thorny seed, it picks it up and throws it into the .open mouth of the snake. The snake begins writhing until it dies

If I had not told you of this, could you have imagined that a thorny seed could have such benefits, or could any one think that a bird, big or small, could hit upon such a plan? You may learn a lesson from this: there are many things with unknown benefits, which may not be known except through an event or

.news to be told

Bees and locusts

Consider the bees and their concerted efforts to produce honey and build the hexagonal hives and consider the subtleties of skill that subsist therein. When you consider the work (of the bees) you will find it extremely wonderful and subtle, and when you consider the result of the work you will find it magnificent and great among people. And when you look at the artisan (the bees), you will find it completely devoid of intelligence and ignorant of itself besides other things. There is a clear evidence in this that the exactitude in skill and ingenuity comes not from the bee but rather from the Omnipotence of Him Who has created the bee in such a pattern and subjected it .to the benefit of man

Look at the locust, how weak yet how strong they are. If you ponder on the creation of a locust, you will find it as one of the weakest creatures. Yet, no one can protect his .village against a swarm of locusts if they invade

Don't you see that if any of the monarchs of the world came out with all his armies to fight the locusts, he would not succeed? Is this not an evidence showing the Omnipotence of Allah the Almighty that the strongest of his creatures should be unable to withstand the attack of the weakest of His creatures? See how locusts flow over the earth like a flood, covering mountains, deserts, and plains, and they may even hide the light of the sun because

of their great numbers. If this is done by hand, contemplate when such huge numbers would ever gather and how many years would be required for that! It is another .evidence of the Omnipotence of Allah the Almighty to which nothing can ever aspire

Fish

Consider the creation of the fish and its compliance to the environment in which it has been created to lead its life! It has no legs, for it does not need to walk. It has no lungs, as it cannot breathe under water. Instead of legs it has been endowed with stout fins with which it strikes water on both sides, just as a boatman strikes water on both sides of the boat with his oars. Its body has been covered with thick scales interlocked with each other like a coat of mail to protect itself against plagues. It has a penetrating faculty of smell, as compensation for its week eyesight blurred by water. It smells its food from a distance and heads for it. Otherwise, how could it find its food and where it is? Know, too, that it has orifices from the mouth to the ears, through which water passes and gives it the same recreative breathing as other animals .breathing fresh air

Now consider its reproductive characteristics. The number of eggs inside a fish is beyond computation. It is to increase the food for other living beings, for most of them live on fish – even beasts lie in wait for fish at the banks of water pools. As

soon as a fish passes by, a beast pounces upon it. Since beasts, birds, people and .even other kinds of fish feed on fish, Allah has made it so in great numbers

If you want to recognize the vast wisdom of the Creator and the limited knowledge of the creatures, look at the different kinds of fishes, shells, and other numberless aquatic creatures. Many of their merits are not known, so that man may come to know them, one after the other, through opportunities that may arise. As an example, the cochineal was found by man through, as it is stated, a dog roaming on the seashore, having found and eaten a snail. Its mouth got coloured. People admired the color and began using the cochineal. There are many other things that people come to ’.know after some time and by chance sometimes

Al-Mufadhdhal said, ‘It was noon. My master got up for the prayers, asking me to come to him early the next morning. I came back so pleased with the knowledge he had taught me and thanked Allah for what He had given me. I spent the night very ”’.pleasantly

The Third Meeting

explaination

Al-Mufadhdhal said, “On the third day, I went early in the morning to my master Imam .as-Sadiq (s). I was permitted to come in and to have a seat

Imam as-Sadiq (s) said, ‘Praise be to Allah Who has favored us and not favored (others) over us. He has favored us with His knowledge (has given us from His (knowledge that He has not given others

and supported us with His patience. Whoever turns away from us will be in Hell and whoever shades himself with the shadow of our lofty tree will be in Paradise. O Mufadhdhal! I have explained to you in detail about the creation of man and the subtle design of Almighty Allah and the lessons to be learnt from the modifications of circumstances. I have also told you about the animal kingdom. Now, I will talk about the sky, the sun, the moon, the stars, the orbits, the day and night, hot and cold, the wind, the four fundamentals (earth, water, air and fire), the rain, rocks, mountains, mud, stones, minerals, date-palms, the plant kingdom, and the signs and lessons .therein

The colour of the sky

Look at the colour of the sky and the perfect design in that! This particular colour is the most appropriate and tonic for the eyesight compared to all other colours. Physicians ask one whose eyes suffer from some illness to gaze frequently at greenery, or at some other darker hue. Some skilful physicians ask one whose sight is .weak to gaze in a green basin full of water

See how Allah the Almighty has created the sky with a green colour that is near dark .so as to not harm the eyes that look often at the sky

That which people have perceived through reason, discernment and experimentation is found clearly in the creation as an extreme wisdom so that the people of understanding may take a lesson and the atheists, may Allah destroy them, may .reflect

O

Mufadhdhal, consider the rising and the setting of the sun to make the day and the night. Without the sunshine, all the affairs of the world would be futile. People would not be able to earn their livings or conduct their affairs while the world was dark over them. They would not be happy in their lives without the pleasure and spirit of light.

Rising and setting of the sun

The benefits of the sunshine are obvious and do not need to be expatiated. Consider the benefits of the sunset! If the sun did not set, people would have no rest or comfort though their need for rest and comfort is absolutely essential for the calmness of their bodies and the relaxation of their senses, besides the facilitation of an easy digestion and the transport of energy to the organs.

And if night did not come, greed would cause people to continue working to gather more wealth and that would harm their bodies and health. The perpetual sunshine heats the earth, and all the animals and plants on it. Allah the Almighty has, therefore, ordained with His wisdom that the sun should shine for a period and set for a period like a lamp that is lit for sometime so that a household can carry out their needs and is then extinguished for sometime so that they can rest and calm down. Light and darkness are opposite to each other and yet both are made subservient to the interests of the world's betterment and amelioration.

The four seasons

Then think of the states of the sun that make the four seasons of the year and the wisdom and advantages therein! In the winter, heat comes back to the trees and plants, and the materials for fruits are formed. Air (humidity) is condensed to make clouds and rains. The bodies of animals grow and become stronger. In the spring, the materials that have been formed in the winter appear and

plants grow and bloom. Animals become excited and ready for copulation. In the summer, the air becomes hot and fruits ripen. The waste matters of bodies dissolve and the surface of the earth becomes dry and ready now for building and for other works. In the autumn, the air is fresh, diseases disappear, bodies are healthy, the night is long that it can be fit for some certain works due to its length, and the weather .is nice for other advantages that to mention will take a lot of time

Now consider the motion of the sun through the twelve Zodiacs to complete a year and the wisdom underlying it. This is the period that comprises the four seasons: winter, spring, summer, and autumn. Grains and fruits ripen during this annual movement of the sun to meet human needs. This cycle of development goes on continually. Do you not see that a year is the period of the movement of the sun from the Aries to the Aries? With a year and its components time has been measured since ancient times and throughout all ages. People calculate thereby the periods of life-spans, loans, contracts and other business matters. It is with the movement of the .sun that a year is completed and a correct estimate of time established

See how the sun sheds its light over the world and with what ingenuity this is! If it shone constantly only at one spot in the sky, its rays would not reach many other directions. It has, therefore, been

so planned that it rises in the East and moves on constantly spreading its light from side to side till it reaches the West so that no place remains without having taken its share of advantage. If the sun were late for a year or a part of a year, how then would the state of people be? In fact, how could they survive? Can you imagine what great, terrible problems people would face that they would have no way of changing? Therefore, the sun has been ordained to persist in its motions without a bit of delay .for the survival and betterment of the world

The moon

Consider the moon for it has a good sign that the public uses to identify the months. A year is not calculated according to the motion of the moon because its motion does not comprehend the changes of seasons or the times of the growing and ripening crops and fruits. So lunar months and years are different from solar months and years. A lunar month varies in that sometimes it comes in the winter and sometimes in .the summer

Consider why the moon shines at night and the ingenuity underlying it. In spite of the need of darkness for the rest and tranquillity of animals and cool air for plants, complete absence of light and total darkness would not have any merit. There would be no possibility for work though people may sometimes need to work at night due to the short time for some works during the day or

due to the extreme heat of the day. Yet, man is able to do many things under the light of the moon. The moonlight helps people work for their livelihood whenever they are so disposed. The wayfarers find fascination in their travels. The moon has been ordained to appear in some nights and disappear in others. The moonlight is less luminous than the sunlight, lest people (out of greed) continue working in the same .way as they do during the day without getting rest even unto perishment

In the different phases of the moon (its appearance as a crescent, its disappearance, waning and eclipses), there are particular indications that all these changes have been ordained for the benefit of the universe by the Almighty Creator, and as lessons .to the people of understanding

The stars

O Mufadhdhal! Consider the stars and their different movements. Some of them do not budge from the positions appointed for them. Some move together in groups. Some others move from zone to zone and have their distinct velocities. Each one of them has two movements: one is general due to the cosmic motion towards the west and the other is special concerning itself towards the east. It is like an ant moving on a quern. The quern moves to the right and the ant to the left. The ant has two different movements: one from its own accord in a forward direction and the other inevitably .with the quern backward

Now ask those who claim that the stars have come into existence by themselves

without a creator or any planning what has prevented them all from being still or whether or not they all move! Carelessness would imply one movement, so how can it give two different movements with accurate accounts? There is an evidence in this showing that the stars and their movements have been created after absolute .planning and wisdom and not by carelessness as the atheists claim

If someone asks: why are some stars stationary while others are moving? We say: if all were moving, the evidences of the movements of the moving ones would be null. Many a secret is known after the movements of the sun and other stars because of their movements in their respective orbits. If all were moving, there would be no certain signs or marks to know their ways of movements, and besides that, people on the earth would be unable to find their ways by following the stars and so the stars would be useless and in vain and one could say that they had been created by themselves or out of carelessness. In their different movements and positions there is a clear evidence showing that they have been created by a Wise Creator and out of .utmost wisdom and planning

Consider the stars that appear at certain times of the year and disappear at others – like the Pleiades, the Orion, the Sirius, and the Canopus. If all of them appeared simultaneously, none could stand as a distinct mark for people to recognise and obtain guidance; rather, people deduce from

the appearance and disappearance of the Orion and the Taurus. The appearance and disappearance of each at appropriate occasions was ordained for the benefit of people. The Pleiades and others have been ordained to appear and disappear at different times for particular benefits of people. In the same way, the constellation of the Bear has been ordained to appear all the time for the certain advantage that it is as a signpost for people to find their ways through the unknown paths in the land and the sea. As the stars of this constellation are always apparent, people look at them immediately when they need to find the path they want. Both these matters, though opposite, serve man's benefits, in addition to other signs that lead to knowing the times for many works and activities like planting, travelling in the land and the sea, and other things like raining, blowing of the winds and the times of hot and cold. Moreover, people find their ways with the aid of the stars in their travels through dreadful deserts and fearful seas in the darkness of night. Besides all this, the stars, in their comings and goings, risings and settings, have many lessons for those who have .understanding minds

If the sun, moon and stars were near enough to us for us to see their very fast movements, would they not dazzle the eyes by their glowing and radiation just as that which happens sometimes when the lightening lingers in the sky? If some people were in a

dome having several lamps that were rotating fast around them, their eyes would be .dazzled until they would fall to the ground

See how it has been ordained for the stars to move with their high speeds at huge distances away from us to protect our eyesight against damage and harms while re… taining their tremendous speed so that their movements are not disturbed. It has been ordained for a little light to come from the stars in order to not leave the earth completely dark when there is no moon. People sometimes need to journey at night, and it would be difficult for them to follow their ways when there is no light at all to .guide them

Consider the kindness and wisdom ordained in this creation. Darkness is also needed, .but a little light has been made through it for the benefits of which we have talked

Think about the universe with its sun, moon, stars and zodiacs, which revolve perpetually over the world in an accurate account through the alternation of the day and the night and the four seasons to bring about numerous benefits to the earth and its people, animals and plants. Is it not clear to anyone with a discerning mind that this is a creation of a Wise Creator? If someone says that mere chance has brought this about, then why does he not say the same thing about a waterwheel rotating to water a garden with trees and plants? Does he deny saying that this small waterwheel, which is made of

wood and with a simple skill, has not been made by a maker? If not, then how can he say this about this great wheel that has been made due to wisdom the like of which human minds fall far short? If this universe became damaged, like the tools that people use in their industries, would the human beings have any means of repairing ?it

Day and night

O Mufadhdhal! Consider the lengths of the day and night and how they are adjusted for the benefit of the creation! Neither the day nor the night exceeds fifteen hours. If the day were a hundred or two hundred hours, do you not see that the earth with its animals and plants would perish? The quadrupeds would not stop grazing as long as there was daylight, and man would not stop working and acting and this would make them all perish. The plants would dry up and burn under the heat of the day and the glow of the sun. Similarly, if the night were prolonged (for a hundred or two hundred hours), all species of living beings would be prevented from moving about to get their foods until they would die of hunger. Plants would lose their vital heat, until they would decay and perish, just as what you see in the plants that are in a place where the sun .shines much

Hot and cold

Consider the hot and cold and how they alternate in the world – increasing, decreasing and moderating – to make the four seasons of the year and the benefits the creatures get thereby. Moreover, the physical bodies become improved and renovated thereby. This leads to their health and longevity; otherwise, the creatures .suffer from decadence, disintegration and emaciation

Think of how they (hot and cold) replace each other gradually and slowly. You will notice that one decreases gradually, giving place gradually to the corresponding increase of the other. If one of them

were to suddenly irrupt the other, it would lead to serious damages and illnesses, just as when one comes from a hot bath immediately to a cold place. The Almighty Allah has ordained the gradual change of heat and cold to protect man from the damages .and harms of sudden changes

If someone claims that this graduality and slowness in the advent of heat and cold results from the slowness of the sun in its movement, he may be asked about the reason behind the movement of the sun and its gradual inclination. If he answers that it is due to the great distance between the East and the West, he may be asked why it is so disposed. The question on this line will continue to be repeated till he is obliged to admit the necessity of omnipotence, purposefulness and wise planning (against .(spontaneity

Without heat, the hard, bitter fruits would not ripen into succulent and sweet ones. Without cold, plants would not grow their buds and would not bear their abundant .fruits

Do you not see the benefits of the heat and cold which, with all their merits, are sources of trouble to the bodies as well. There is a lesson for those who ponder, and a proof that all this has been ordained by the Wise Creator for the goodness of the .world

The air

O Mufadhdhal! Let me inform you of the blessings of the wind. Do you not see that when it stops blowing and is stagnant, distress comes and is about to do away

with the souls? Healthy persons feel ill, the sick get worse, fruits get spoiled, legumes get decayed, epidemics spread among people and animals and plagues in the plants. This proves that the blowing of the wind has been ordained by the Wise Lord for the .good of the creatures

I will tell you about another aspect of the air. Sound is produced by the impact of two bodies and the air takes it to the ears. People talk day and night on their needs and daily affairs. If speech were to remain in the air as writing remains on paper, the world would be filled with it and people would suffer much and be disturbed and troubled, and they would need to refresh (erase) and replace it with other much more than their need to refresh their books and writings because that which is spoken is much more than that which is written. The Almighty Creator (glory be to Him) has made the air as a hidden paper that retains the speech just for the required time until people achieve their need of it, and then it is erased and this hidden paper gets .refreshed again to carry other speeches again and again forever

The air has great benefits for everything on the earth. It is the life of these bodies and their guard from inside through that which is breathed from outside that keeps the spirit alive. The air drives the sounds away and carries smells from one place to another. Do you not see how

the air wafts different kinds of scents to your nose? The same is said about sounds. This same air is the carrier of heat and cold, which alternate regularly for the benefit of the world. The blowing wind is from this air that relieves people when blowing and carries clouds from one place to another, so that all may receive their benefits, until they are condensed to rain. The wind pollinates the trees and plants, pushes ships to move, softens foods, cools water, inflames fire, dries up wet things and, in general, it enlivens everything on the earth. Without this blowing air, vegetation would dry up, .animals (and living beings) would die and things would be heated and corrupted

The earth

O Mufadhdhal! Consider the four elements (earth, water, air and fire) created by Allah the Almighty to adequately fulfil the purpose of their creation. Among them is this earth and its expanse. If it were not so vast, how then would it suffice for the human needs of housing, agriculture, meadows, forests, jungles, precious herbs of medicine ?and valuable minerals

Someone may dispute the existence of empty, desolate deserts and ask what benefits lie in them? It is said to him that these lands are the abodes of beasts and their pastures. Besides, they are as a breather for people if they need to replace their homelands. Many desolate lands have been changed into palaces and gardens when people moved to live in them. If the earth were not so vast, people would find themselves as prisoners

in narrow, walled places and they would not be able to leave their homes even if .pressed by circumstances

Think of the creation of the earth, in that it is so finely balanced so as to be a fit habitat for all things; people are able to move about on the earth and carry out their needs and living affairs, sit on it to get rest and comfort, sleep on it quietly and tranquilly, and conduct their businesses easily. If the earth were flickering and upset, it would be impossible for people to erect buildings or carry out trades and industries, and they .would not live happily with the ground flickering under them

Think of the earthquakes that last only for a short while, and yet people leave their homes and flee in every direction. If someone asks: why does the earth quake? It is said to him that earthquakes and the likes are as lessons and warnings for people to refrain from sins and vices. The calamities afflicting them and their properties have the same purpose, leading to their advantage and betterment in this life and, if they are virtuous, a reward and compensation in the hereafter incomparable to all that is in the earth. It sometimes happens that there is an immediate reward in this world, if .such reward is in the interests of people generally or individually

The earth in its nature that Allah has created is cool and dry and so is the stone, but the stone is relatively harder than the earth. If

the earth were hard like the stone, could it produce any vegetation on which human ?and animal life depend? Would plowing and planting be possible

Do you not see that it is more flexible than the stone? It has been made pliable and .soft to be fit for all man's services

Water

Allah the Almighty has ordained the earth to be in a gradual slope from the north to the south (the northern parts of the earth are at higher levels than the southern parts). Allah has made the earth like this to allow water to flow on its surface and, after irrigating the lands, to flow into the sea, just as a roof is made sloping from one side to another to prevent water from gathering in one place. The earth has been made so for the same reason. If it were not so, the whole earth would be swamped .with water, and this would trouble people and block their ways and paths

If water were not so abundant and flowing through springs, valleys and rivers, it would fail to suffice the needs of men, animals and plants. A shortage of water would .affect all kinds of beasts, birds and fishes and all aquatic living creatures as well

Besides it has other benefits of which you are aware yet ignorant of their great value and merit. Water is the source of life for all animate creatures and plants. It may be mixed with different drinks to be delicious to drinkers. With water, bodies and other things are cleansed

of dirt. Soil is dampened with water to make it fit for different works. With water, fire is extinguished when it flares up and people face dangers. Exhausted people refresh themselves by bathing with water; and there are many other benefits that are known .only at the time of need

If you have any doubts about the benefit of abundant water in the seas, you should know that it is the abode of many different kinds of fishes and aquatic creatures. It is a treasure house of pearls, rubies, ambergris and various other kinds of precious materials that are extracted from under the seas. At seashores, there are different plants that provide good perfumes and herbs for drugs. Furthermore, water is a means of travel and trade between distant countries, such as Iraq and China. If these long-distance trades had no means except to be carried on backs, they would become corrupted and remain in their countries and in their keepers hands because the costs of carrying them would be much more than their actual prices; therefore, no one would venture to carry them, and this would lead to the waste of many necessities people require and would end the living of those who carry them and live .by means of them

Likewise, if the air were not so abundant and vast, people and other creatures would .suffocate because of the smoke and vapours that would congest in it

Fire

.If fire were spread like water and air, it would burn the world and all that it had

Rather, it has been stored in things so as to be obtained only when needed. It is preserved with fuels and firewood as long as it is needed. It does not require fuels to burn, for it does not cost much, nor does it appear everywhere, for it would burn everything. It has been created in accurate consideration so that people may make .use of its benefits and avoid its harms

It has another characteristic: it has been assigned only for the benefit of man. Animals have no need of fire nor do they enjoy it. Man would suffer much in his living if there .were no fire

Since Allah the Almighty has ordained it to be so, man has been endowed with palms and fingers to enable him to light up the fire and make use of it, while the animals have not been gifted with these abilities. However, animals have been gifted with patience for the difficult lives they lead so that they would not be at a loss as man .would be when there was no fire

I will tell you about one of the benefits of fire in a little thing whose importance is so great: it is the lamp that people use to satisfy their needs in the night. Without it, people would spend their lives (at night) as if they were in graves. How could one read, write, weave or do many other things in the darkness of the night without the light of fire? What would be the state of one

who is afflicted with a harm or illness at night when he needs a surgical treatment or ?bandage

The benefits of fire in cooking, warming the body, drying the moist substances, .dissolving hard materials, and many other things cannot be counted

The climate

O Mufadhdhal! Consider the clear weather and the rainfall and their alternating in the world and the goodness they have. If one of them (clear weather or rainfall) continues, it causes harms to the world. Do you not see that when rains fall for prolonged times, legumes and vegetables decay, animals become slack, the air becomes clammy and causes many diseases and the roads and streets are damaged. When the sky remains clear for prolonged times, the earth becomes dried up, plants wither, the waters of springs and rivers decrease which causes harms to animals and plants, the air becomes dry and other kinds of diseases occur. When they alternate thus regularly, the climate becomes moderate and each of them improves the .demerits of the other and everything goes right

If someone asks: why has it not been ordained that no harm should be in any of that at all? It ought to be said to him that it is so in order to make man suffer somehow and feel some pain to encourage him to refrain from sins. As when man's body suffers from some illness and needs bitter drugs to recover and restore soundness, man, likewise, when he transgresses and exceeds the limits, needs what pains him and makes him suffer so that he

may refrain from his faults and turn back to the right path of goodness and guidance. If a monarch bestows great amounts of gold and silver on his people, will not his munificence impress their minds with reverence and admiration and will not his mention be raised everywhere? Can one rainfall, which falls on a country and brings with it goodness and blessings that are more than all of the gold and silver of all ?countries, be compared to the gold and silver of that monarch

Do you not see what a great blessing this little rain is for people? Yet people are heedless thereof. It may happen that someone's needs or works are disturbed due to rainfall, and then he becomes angry and discontented, preferring the trivial benefit to the great one that is better for his end. It is because of his ignorance of the lofty .boons therein

Consider the falling of the rain on the earth and the wise ordainment in it! It has been ordained to pour from high up in order to include all high places and irrigate them. If the rain were to fall from a certain side or angle, it would not include the high places and so the lands there could not be cultivated. Do you not see that the lands that are irrigated artificially are less than those irrigated by rains? It is so because the rains cover all the earth, and the vast lands and the feet of mountains may be cultivated to .provide many crops

By the

fall of rains, people are relieved from the trouble of carrying water from one place to another and from the quarrels happening amongst them over the sources of water until the strong people of influence aggressively obsess the source of water and .deprive the weak of it

Then, since rainwater has been ordained to fall onto the earth, it has been made into drops, showering to penetrate into the earth and irrigate it. If it poured, it would flow on the surface of the earth and would not penetrate into it; besides that, it would destroy the plants. Therefore, rains have been ordained to fall in mild showers to .enliven the earth and make seeds and plants grow

There are other blessings in rainfall. It tempers the bodies, purifies the air, removes pollutions and epidemics, and cleans the plants from mildews and the like besides .many other benefits

If someone asks: does rain not cause heavy damage in some years when it falls in intensive quantities or hails which destroy the fruitful plants and cause much humidity ?in the air that in turn causes many diseases against man and plants

In response, it is said that this damage is sometimes needed to reform man and make him refrain from sins and vices, and then the benefit he receives in his religion is more .important than the damage he receives in his properties

Mountains

O Mufadhdhal! Look at these mountains formed of earth and stone, which the ignorant consider useless and unnecessary whereas they have many advantages. From among these advantages

is that snow falls on the heights of mountains and remains there till the time of need. When snow melts, it makes springs and rivers flow with water and makes different kinds of trees and herbs grow that do not grow in plains and other places. Mountains have caves and holes for beasts. Mountains are used as strong forts against enemies. From mountains, rocks are cut and taken for buildings and querns. They contain mines of precious stones and different minerals, besides many other advantages that .no one knows save the Knower, the Wise

Minerals

O Mufadhdhal! Think of the different kinds of minerals and precious stones that are extracted from the mines in the mountains such as plaster, lime, gypsum, arsenic, zinc, mercury, copper, tin, silver, gold, aquamarine, beryl, and various other kinds of rocks besides tar, sulphur, petroleum and others that people use to meet their needs. Is it unclear to anyone with reason that all these treasures have been laid in the earth ?for man to take out and with them satisfy his needs

People, in spite of their greed, have failed to discover all these treasures. If they could, with all the knowledge they have, do that, definitely gold and silver would appear and spread everywhere in the world and then they (gold and silver) would lose their real value before people and would be of no use in buying, selling or other dealings. Rulers would not gather wealth, and people would not save any for their .heirs

Nevertheless, people have been given the

knowledge to make brass from copper, glass from sand, silver from lead and gold .from silver and the like that have no harm

Just see how they have been given the knowledge of that which has no harm and .have not been given the knowledge of that which would harm them if they had it

If someone enters into mines, he arrives at a great valley flowing with abundant water, the bottom of which no one can reach or cross, and after it there are near .mountains of silver

Now, think of the wisdom of the Wise Creator in His creation. He has intended to show His people His omniscience and vast treasures so that they might know that if Allah had willed to give them as much silver as there are mountains, he would do so, but there would be no good to them in that because this precious mineral would lose its real value before people and then it would not benefit them. Rare things are precious and dear, but when they are available in abundant quantities and everyone can attain them, they no longer remain precious or dear because things are dear due to their .rarity

Plants

PART ١

O Mufadhdhal! Consider the plants and the many advantages they provide. Fruits are for food, hay is fodder for animals, firewood is fuel, wood is used for carpentry, and .the bark, leaves, roots and gums also have many other uses

Think if fruits were to be found accumulated on the ground and not growing on the ,branches which bear them

what a disruption would there be in our living! Nutrition would be available no doubt, but what about the valuable benefits of wood, firewood and all the other things mentioned above? This is besides the pleasure one feels when looking at the beautiful scenes of plants and fruitful trees that are incomparable with any other scene in the .world

O Mufadhdhal! Think of the revenue that has been placed in plants – how one seed produces a hundred seeds or more or less. One seed should produce one seed but why has it not been ordained to be so? Seeds and plants give multiple revenues because farmers need some to sow in their farms and some others to feed on until their plants will bear fruits later on. Do you not see that when a ruler wants to build a country, he gives its people seeds that suffice them for planting and food until they ?are able to harvest their coming fruits

All kinds of trees are so. You find on a tree many branches. If a tree remains isolated without having branches or shoots, people cannot cut anything of it, and if it is .afflicted with a plague to perish, the species disappears without leaving a substitute

O Mufadhdhal! Consider the grains of pulses such as lentils, peas, beans and the like! They grow in pods to be protected from plagues and harms until they gain in strength and hardness, just like the placenta that protects the foetus. The grains of wheat and other similar grains come

out in hard shells, pointed sharply at their ends like spears to ward off birds and save .the yield for farmers

If someone asks: don't birds have to eat from these wheat and grains? It is answered: yes, birds are creatures of Allah and Allah has assigned them a share from the yields of the earth, but grains have been protected in this way so that birds will not be able to eat and play with these grains whenever and however they like, which might cause terrible harms to these crops. If these grains were bare and not protected in this way, birds would pounce upon them and do away with them all. At the same time, birds would suffer indigestion resulting in death and farmers would lose much. Grains have been provided with these protective means to be kept safe, and birds cannot take from them except a little, while most of them remain for man who is worthier of them because it is he who has drudged at farms and that which he needs is more than that .which birds need

Consider the wisdom in creating the trees and the different kinds of plants! Since they always need nutriment like man and animals do and since they have no mouths like the living beings nor can they move to get their food, their roots have been made firmly planted into the earth to enable them to extract their food from the earth and carry it to the branches, leaves and fruits on them just as

.mothers suckle their children

Do you not see that the poles of tents are tied with ropes from every side so that they will remain erect and not fall down? Likewise, plants have roots extended into the earth in every direction to remain erect and fixed. Otherwise, how could long date ?palms and great trees withstand storms

See how the wisdom of the Creator has preceded the skill of people in fixing tents! People have taken their skills from the creation because trees have been created long before tents have been invented. Do you not see the poles of tents have been taken from the trees? Thus, crafts have taken their skills from the ingenuities of the .creation

O Mufadhdhal! Consider the creation of the leaves of plants. You will see lines like veins spread throughout the leaf. Some of them are thick extending in every side throughout the whole leaf while some others are thin extending between the thick ones and woven accurately. If leaves were made by man, the leaves of one tree would not be completed in a year and many tools, actions, dealings, speech and too .much work would be required

In a few days of spring, huge numbers of plants and leaves grow that fill the mountains, the plains and the lands of the earth. All of that is made without action or speech but by the Will, which is influential over everything, and by the obeyed .Command

Know, nevertheless, the principle underlying these fine capillaries. They are interwoven in the texture of the whole

leaf to irrigate it and to transport water to every part of it, just as the veins spread in .the body of man to carry nutriment to every part of it

The thick veins of the leaf have another job. They, with their solidity, hold together the leaf to prevent it from being torn. These leaves are similar to the leaves made by man from rags having sticks to hold them together. The craft of man imitates the creation .of Allah although it does not reach the actuality it imitates

Consider the pit and its importance! It has been placed inside the fruit in order to be like a nursery plant when the original plant is damaged or cannot be planted for any reason. Moreover, the pit, because of its solidity, keeps the flaccid and soft fruit tenacious; otherwise, a fruit would break and decay. Some kinds of pits are edible and .some others give oils that are used in foods and other fields

Think, now, of that which you find on the pits of ripe dates and grapes. What is the reason behind that and why are they in this shape? Instead of that, there should be something inedible like that in the nabk, the cypress and the like. It is so that man may .enjoy the delicious tastes of these fruits

Consider the other aspects of plants. You will find that they die once every year. The vital heat is enshrined in their twigs, and the materials for fruit are generated in them. Then, again, they come

to life and grow to give you delicious kinds of fruits so you serve different kinds of food. You find the branches of trees receiving you with their fruits as if they are presenting them to you by hand. You see flowers greeting you from atop their branches as if they are presenting to you their breaths. Who has planned all this? Surely it is He, the Wise Ordainer. And for what is all that? Surely, it is to entertain man with these fruits and the lights of these flowers. How strange it is that instead of being !grateful to these blessings, man denies the Giver

PART ٢

Consider the pomegranate and the skill and ingenuity that lie in its creation! You see inside it what resembles hills of fat accumulated in its sides and seeds aligned so accurately as if they were arranged by hands. You see the seeds in groups and each group is wrapped with screens fabricated uniquely and wonderfully and all these are .enveloped with the outer peel

The artistic ingenuity therein is that since the seeds alone cannot help each other in growing, that fat has been made between the seeds to supply them with food. Do you not see that the roots of the seeds are stuck into this fat? Then the seeds are wrapped with these screens to hold them together and to not be confused. After that, the seeds are fortified with a strong peel to enable them to stand against plagues. This is a little of the much there

is in the description of the pomegranate. It has more than this, but we do not want to .expatiate in speech; what we have mentioned to you is enough to ponder over

O Mufadhdhal! Think about how the weak plants carry such heavy fruits like squash, cucumber and melon and what great wisdom there is behind such ordinance! When these plants are ordained to bear such heavy fruits, they are made to sleep on the ground. If they were erect like other trees and plants, they would not be able to bear such heavy fruits and they would perish before their fruits ripened. See how these plants sprawl on the ground in order to place their heavy fruits on it to carry them instead of on these weak plants. You see gourd and melon sleeping on the ground and their fruits scattered around them like a sleeping cat with its kittens around it for .suckling

See how these kinds of plants grow in the very hot season, and see how people long for their fruits and receive them gladly! If they were to grow in the wintertime, people would refrain from them besides that they would harm man's health. You may find some cucumbers in the winter, but people refrain from eating them except the gluttonous who do not refrain from eating what harms them and diseases their .stomachs

O Mufadhdhal! Consider the date-palms. Since there are females among this type of tree that need to be pollinated, male trees have been ordained to grow planting. A male

palm tree is like a male animal that pollinates the female to bear, but it itself does not .bear

Consider carefully the trunk of the date…palm. You will find that it is woven from extended threads with other cross ones like the clothes that are woven by hands. It is so to be strong and hard enough to bear the heavy leaves and fruits and to not break .before violent storms and to be firm enough for roofs, bridges and other things

You also find wood as a textile woven with lengthwise and cross-parts like the parts of flesh. Nevertheless, it is so hard and tenacious that it is fit for making different tools and furniture. If it were hard like stone, it would not be fit to be used in roofing or other things where wood is used, like in the making of doors, beds, coffins and the like. One of the great aspects of wood is that it floats in water. All people know this fact, but not all of them know its great importance. Without this aspect of wood, how could ships and vessels carry heavy cargos and relieve people from the burden of carrying heavy goods from one country to another? It would cost people too much besides that it would cause many goods needed by people to disappear from the .markets or it would be difficult for people to obtain them

Consider the herbs of drugs and the characteristics each one has. One penetrates into the joints to release thick wastes, some others

deal with the humours of the body, some relieve of the wind, some treat tumours, and .the like

Who then has endowed these plants with these powers, and who has made people realize these facts in them? Surely it is He Who has created them for this purpose. How could these facts come to man's mind by chance and accident, as some atheists say? Well, let us allow that man has learnt all these facts through his own intellect, reason, contemplation and experimentation. Then how did the beasts come to realize that, so that when a beast is afflicted with some illness or injury, it eats certain herbs and recovers? When some birds suffer from constipation, they get well by purgation .with seawater, and there are too many other examples

You may doubt the utility of plants in the wild lands and deserts, where no human life exists, and think them meaningless and useless. Certainly not! Beasts feed on these plants, and birds feed on their seeds. Their twigs and wood are used as fuel by people. There are other benefits in these plants. They have some substances that are used as medicines, some for tanning hides, some with which to dye clothes, and various other .benefits

Do you not know that one of the meanest kinds of plants is the papyrus? Yet it has many benefits. Paper is made from papyrus that rulers and the public need. Mats that are used by all classes of people are made from this plant. From papyrus, covers are made to

keep different utensils. It is used as padding between fragile utensils and in baskets .so that they may not break, besides many other benefits

You should take a lesson from the different benefits in the little and big things Allah has created and in those which have values and in those which do not. The most worthless of all are dungs and excreta, which are worthless and filthy, and yet they have an important role in agriculture. They are incomparable in their use for plants. No vegetable grows well except with dung and other (animal) fertilizers, which people .find dirty and avoid being near

Know that the worth of a thing is not due to its material value. It has two different values in two different markets. Perhaps that which is mean in the commercial market may be precious in the market of knowledge. Do not belittle a thing just because it is has little value. If chemists were to realize what there is in dung, they would buy it for ’.the most expensive prices

Al-Mufadhdhal said, ‘It was then the time for the noon prayers. My master Imam as-Sadiq (a.s) got up to prepare for the prayers and asked me to come to him early the next day. I left so happy because of what he had taught me, and I praised Allah for ”’.the great information I had received from him. I spent the night extremely delighted

The Fourth Meeting

explaination

Al-Mufadhdhal said, “On the fourth day, I went to my master early in the morning. I was permitted to

,come in. He asked me to sit down, and I did. Imam as-Sadiq (s) said

From us is praising, glorification, and sanctification to the Oldest Name, the Greatest‘ Light, the Exalted Knower, the Lord of glory and honor, the Creator of mankind, the Annihilator of the worlds and ages, the Keeper of the hidden secret, the forbidden unseen, the concealed name and the hidden knowledge. His blessings be on the announcer of His revelation and the executor of His mission, who He has sent as a bringer of good tidings and a warner, and as a summoner unto Allah by His permission, and as a lamp that gives light, that he who would perish might perish by clear proof, and he who would live might live by clear proof, so on him and his progeny be good blessings and pure greetings and on him and his progeny be peace, mercy and blessings from the ancient times until forever, and they are well-qualified for that .and they deserve it

O Mufadhdhal, I have explained to you the evidences of creation and the examples of the accurate, planned ordinance in the creation of man, animals, plants and other things that have clear lessons for him who takes lessons. Now, I will tell you about the plagues that occurred in some ages and which some ignorant people took as an excuse to deny the creation, the Creator and the intended ordinance. I shall tell about the calamities and misfortunes, death and perishment that atheists and Manicheans have denied as well

as those who have claimed that things came into existence by chance and accident. I shall refute them, may Allah destroy them for how they turn away from the truth!

Plagues and misfortunes

Some ignorant people have taken the plagues such as epidemics, jaundices, hailstorms and attacks of locusts, which occurred from time to time, as excuses to deny the Creator and the intentional ordinance in the creation. It is said, in answering such people: if there were no creator, then why would worse and more horrible events than these plagues not happen? For example, why wouldn't the sky fall on the ground, or the ground sink, or the sun not shine at all, or rivers and springs dry up until no water could ever be found, or the wind stop blowing until everything would decay and become corrupt, or seawater flow over the earth? Then, why do these plagues, such as epidemics, locusts and the like that we have mentioned, not last for such a long time that they would invade and devastate the entire world? In fact, they take place for some time and then soon disappear. Do you not see that the world is protected and saved from the great, terrible events that if even one of them were to take place for a long time, it might cause the destruction of the world? Thus, the world is kept safe through these simple plagues so that people may be disciplined and reform themselves and take lessons. Then, after not too long, when people feel desperate,

these plagues disappear; therefore, the occurrence of these plagues is as a warning, .and their disappearance is as a mercy to the people

The Manicheans say: if the world has a kind, merciful creator, then why do these calamities and misfortunes take place? They say that the life of man in this world should be free from any trouble. We say: if it is so, man, out of ingratitude and haughtiness, will do everything that fits neither the religion nor this worldly life. Quite often, you find that many people who have been nurtured in luxury and ease forget even that they are human, or they have a Lord, or harm or misfortunes may afflict them, or they have to be merciful to the weak, help the poor, be kind to the miserable, and have pity for the weak and distressed. But when misfortunes afflict them and they taste their bitterness, they awake from their ignorance and indifference and turn .back to that which they should have been doing

Those who deny these harmful matters are like children who hate bitter drugs, become angry when prevented from harmful foods, dislike disciplines and work, like to be free for amusement and idleness and like to have anything to eat and drink. They do not know where idleness takes them. It takes them to a bad upbringing and bad habits. Harmful, yet delicious foods cause them different illnesses and diseases. Disciplines bring them reform and goodness, and bitter drugs benefit them even if .they are somewhat troublesome

:If they ask

why has man not been made infallible against sins so that he would not then need to be afflicted with misfortunes? It is answered: how would it be if man were not praised and rewarded for the good deeds he does? If they ask: what harm will it be to man if he is not rewarded for the good deeds he does as long as he enjoys pleasures and bliss? It is said to them: make an offer to a sound, reasonable man that he should sit idly and at ease and receive whatever he wants without any effort or work, and see whether he accepts this or not. You will find that he is more delighted with the little he receives out of his own efforts than the abundance he should receive undeservingly. So is the bliss of the hereafter. It is earned by man based on his own efforts and merits. The mercy bestowed on man in this aspect is too great. If he is rewarded for his deeds in this life and shown the way to get that deservingly through his own efforts, delight and happiness with what he receives will be perfected to him. If they ask: is it not possible that some people rely on the goodness they get even if they do not deserve it? Then what excuse is there in preventing one who wants to attain the bliss of the hereafter due to this argument? It is said to them: if this were permitted to people, they would

get the utmost rabies. They would dare to commit all sins and vices and violate all forbidden limits. Who would refrain from sins or bear hardship in the way of virtues, and who would feel safe about himself, his family and his properties from people if he did not fear the punishment of the hereafter? The harm of this matter would affect people in this life before the afterlife, and so justice and wisdom would be invalidated, and it would give an excuse to criticize the divine ordinance that it is not true and it .puts things in other than their suitable places

These persons may talk about the misfortunes that afflict all people, whether good or bad, or the ones that afflict good people while bad people remain safe from them. They ask: how is this possible in the wise ordinance of the Wise Ordainer, and what is the reason behind that? It is said to them: Allah has made these misfortunes, which afflict both good and bad people, as a reform for both kinds of people. That which afflicts good people increases the blessings of their Lord on them and that makes them thank Allah and be patient, while that which afflicts bad people makes them stop their evil and refrain from sins and vices. These misfortunes also contain good for those who are not afflicted with them. As for the good people, they become delighted with the goodness and righteousness they are in and become more willing to continue on their way. But

as for the bad people, they realize the mercy and kindness of their Lord to them and the safety they are in though they do not deserve it. And this leads them to be kind to people and forgive those who have done them wrong.

One may say: these misfortunes afflict people through their properties; so what about those misfortunes that afflict their bodies and may cause them to perish, such as fire, drowning, flood, and earthquake? It is said: Allah has made goodness for both kinds of people in these calamities too. As for the good people, leaving this life relieves them from its obligations and saves them from its misfortunes; and, as for the bad people, it clarifies their burdens and sins and prevents them from committing more sins. In short, Allah the Almighty with His wisdom and power has ordained all things towards goodness and advantageousness. Just like when a tree is broken down by the wind, and a good carpenter makes from it many useful tools, so does the Wise Ordainer. He turns the misfortunes that afflict people through their properties and bodies into goodness and benefit. If someone asks: why do these misfortunes happen to people? It is said to him: it is so lest people turn to sins because of the long peacefulness they live in, and then bad people exaggerate in committing sins and good people slacken in doing good. Both these matters (exaggerating in committing sins and slackening in doing good) prevail amongst people when they live at

ease and in peace, while these events that afflict them deter them and make them turn back to their reasons. If they live free from such events, they will exaggerate in transgression and disobedience just as the people of ancient ages did, until they .deserved perishment through great floods and the earth was purified from them

Death and perishment

From among what the atheists, who deny planning and ordinance in creation, criticize is death and extinction. They say that people should live forever in this life free from any plague and misfortune. It is necessary to carry the argument to its logical .conclusion to see the consequences to which it leads

Consider that if all those who had entered this world and those who will enter it remained and not a single one of them died, do you not think that this earth would become too narrow for them? They would not have enough room for their dwellings, farms or the requirements of their living. People, although death always perishes them, compete over abodes and farms until wars break out between them and bloods are shed. Then, how would it be if they were born but did not die, in spite of their ?greed and hardheartedness

If people become certain that they will not die, they will not be satisfied with anything they receive and no one will give anything to anyone who asks him. No one will forget or overlook anything that has happened to him. Yet, they will become wearied with this life and everything in it, just

like one who lives long becomes wearied of his life and wishes he would die and be .free from this world

If they (the atheists) say: it should have been ordained that plagues and misfortunes would not afflict people so that they would not wish for death or yearn for it. We have already described that it would take people towards transgressions and evils which would make them corrupt in religion and life. If they (the atheists) say: people should not reproduce so that dwellings and livings would not become narrow for them. It should be said to them: then, most creatures would be prevented from entering this world and enjoying the blessings and gifts of Allah the Almighty in this life and the afterlife if only one generation, who would not reproduce, were to enter this world. And if they say: all people, who had been created and who will be created until the last day of the world, should be created in that one generation. It should be said to them: we have already said that dwellings and livelihoods would not be enough. And if people did not reproduce, the pleasure felt through kin relationships, their support in misfortunes, and the pleasure and happiness of having and upbringing children would be missed. This proves that all the claims and imaginations of the atheists – other .than that which has been ordained by the Wise Creator – are wrong and nonsensical

Criticizing the divine ordinance

:A criticizer may criticize the divine ordinance from another point of view and say

is there ordinance in this world while we see that powerful persons oppress, transgress and rape, the weak are wronged and humiliated, good people are poor and afflicted with distresses, bad people are sound and wealthy, sinners and criminals are not punished immediately? If there is in fact planned ordinance in the world, affairs should happen according to analogy: good people should be blessed, bad people should be deprived, powerful people should be unable to wrong the weak, and sinners should be punished immediately. It is said in answering this: if it were so, doing good, with which man has been preferred over other creatures, would disappear. People would not do good or benevolence expecting to be rewarded and trusting in what Allah has promised in return. People would be like animals that are led by whip and fodder. No one would act due to the certainty of being rewarded or punished until people would emerge from humanity into animality. What is not seen (the unseen) would not be known and no one would act except for the present pleasures of the worldly life. Even good people would act to earn livelihood and wealth in this worldly life only and those who refrain from oppression and sins would do that just for fear of immediate punishment until all people's deeds would be done only for the present and with no certainty of what is with Allah, and they would not deserve the reward of the hereafter or the eternal bliss in it; nevertheless, these things

that the criticizer has mentioned – wealth and poverty, good health and affliction – .are not contrary to his analogy, but they may happen according to that sometimes

You may find many good persons who are granted with wealth for certain wisdom and lest people think that it is the atheists who are provided with the means of subsistence while the pious are underprivileged and thence prefer debauchery to piety. And you find that many transgressors are punished when their transgressions and harms increase against people and against themselves, as with Pharaoh when he was punished with drowning and Nebuchadnezzar was punished with getting lost and Belbis with killing. Allah may delay the punishment of some evildoers and postpone the reward of some good doers till the afterlife for some reasons unknown to people. This does not refute the planned ordinance. Many rulers in the earth do this without annulling their ordinances. In fact, their delaying of what they delay and hastening of what they hasten are considered within their right of statesmanship and farsightedness. Since all evidences and their analogy necessitate that things have a wise creator then what prevents this Creator from managing His creation? According to their analogy, a maker does not neglect his craft except for one of three reasons: inability, ignorance or evilness; but all of these are impossible in the creation of Allah the Almighty for an unable one cannot make such great, wonderful creatures, an ignorant one does not know what is right and wise, and an evil one

does not try to create and establish such things. If it is so, then definitely the creator of these creatures manages them, although much of this management cannot be understood by people. The public does not understand much of the management of rulers nor do they know its reasons because they do not know the secrets of the rulers nor what is there in their minds. If the reason behind a certain management becomes known, it will be found as right and correct. If you have a doubt regarding some drug or food, and then it becomes clear to you in two ways or three that it is cold or hot, will you not judge that it is as you have found and then remove the doubt from your mind? So what about these ignorants? Why do they not judge that this world has been created and managed by a Wise Creator, and deny that it has been created in spite of all the evidences before them that cannot be counted? If half of the world and what it contained were somehow ambiguous, whether correct or not, it would not be a good thinking or courtesy to judge that all the world had been established out of indifference and by chance because the other half would have accurate and perfect things that would refute such hasty, untrue opinions. How is it then that whenever one searches, he finds the utmost correctness and perfection so that nothing may come to one's mind unless it is found

?most right and perfect

O Mufadhdhal, know that the name of the universe in Greek is “cosmos” which means embellishment. It has been called so by philosophers and wise people too. They called it so when they saw its perfect order and organization. They did not call it “order” or “organization” but called it “embellishment” to show that, besides its exactness and .perfection, it was the utmost in beauty and splendor

O Mufadhdhal! I wonder at those people who do not judge medicine to be faulty though they see doctors commit mistakes, but they judge the world to be neglected (with no manager) though they do not see anything neglected in it. I really wonder at the morals of those who claim to be wise but ignore morals among people and set their tongues free to abuse the Exalted Creator, glory be to Him! The wonder is at the wretched (Mani) when he pretends to have the knowledge of secrets while he is blind to the evidences of wisdom in the creation and claims that the creation is full of !mistakes and the Creator is ignorant

The oddest of all are the atheists who wanted to perceive by the senses what could not be perceived by reason, and when they failed, they denied the existence of the Creator and said: why is He not perceived by reason? It is said: He is above the position of reason, as sight when does not see that which is above its position. When ,you see a stone rising in the air

you know that someone has thrown it. This knowledge comes not from the sight but out of reason, because it is reason that distinguishes and knows that a stone does not rise by itself. Do you not see how the eyesight stops at a point and does not exceed it? So does reason. It stops at a point in the cognizance of the Creator and does not exceed it, but it realizes His existence through reasoning. It is the same reason by which man realizes that there is a soul inside him though he does not see or feel it by .any of the senses

Reason and the Creator

And according to this too, we say: reason perceives the Creator in a way that necessitates man to acknowledge His existence, and it does not perceive Him in a way that necessitates man to know His qualities. If they ask: how is a weak man charged with knowing the Creator without knowing His qualities? It is said to them: people have been charged with what they can do and within their abilities, that is to believe in the Creator and to follow His orders and prohibitions, and they have not been charged with knowing His attributes. A king does not ask his subjects to know whether he is tall or short, white or brown; rather, he asks them to submit to his rule and follow his orders. Do you not think that if someone were to come to a king and say "present yourself to me so that I can

know you fully; otherwise, I will not follow your orders", he would expose himself to punishment? In the same way, he who refuses to believe in the Creator until he knows His essence will receive His wrath. And if they say: do we not describe Him when we say that He is the Mighty, the Wise, and the Generous? It is said to them: these are attributes of acknowledgment and not of description. We know that He is wise but we do not know the essence of His wisdom, and the same can be said about His other attributes. We see the heaven but we do not know its essence, and we look at the sea but we do not know where it ends. The examples of this cannot be counted, though they fail in comparison, but they lead the reason to know the Creator. If they ask: then why do people disagree over Him? It is said: because minds fail to recognize the extent of His greatness and exceed their capacities in searching to know Him, and they want to know everything about Him while they are unable to do that or even the .least of it

One of these examples is the sun that shines all over the world and yet no one knows its reality. There are too many sayings about it, and philosophers have disagreed over how to describe it. Some of them say that it is a hollow star full of fire with a mouth agitating with flames. Some others say

it is a cloud. Some say it is a glass mass that concentrates heat and then sends rays. Some say it is a fine, clear mass of congealed seawater. Others say it is many parts of fires gathered together. Some others say it is a fifth element separate from the four elements. Then they have disagreed over its shape. Some of them say it is like a flat page. Others say it is like a ball. They have also disagreed on its size. Some say it is as big as the earth. Some others say it is less, and some say it is much greater than a great island. People of geometry say it is one hundred and seventy times bigger than .the earth

The disagreement in the sayings about the sun shows that people cannot realize its reality. Minds are unable to realize the reality of the sun, which eyes clearly see and senses easily feel, then how about what is beyond the senses and hidden from the minds? If they say: why is He hidden? It is said to them: He is not hidden with a means, as one who hides from people behind doors and walls. The meaning of our saying "He is hidden" is that He is invisible to the eyes and minds because He is beyond the extent of the faculties of eyes and minds, like the case with the sun which is a creation created by Him and cannot be realized by eyes and minds. If they say: why is

He so greatly beyond that? This is a wrong saying because it does not befit One Who is the Creator of everything except to be different from everything and exalted over .everything. Glory be to Him the Almighty

If they say: how is it possible that He is different from everything and exalted over everything? It should be said to them that the truth about things can be known in four ways: first, to see whether that thing is existent or not; second, to know what it is in its essence; third, to know how it is and what its description is; and fourth, to know why and for what cause it is. There is nothing in this existence that man can know in the Creator as it is except that he knows that He exists. If we say: how and what is He? Knowing His essence and all things about Him is beyond the bounds of possibility. Or we say: for what is He? It is not valid in the description of the Creator because He, glory be to Him, is the cause of everything, and nothing is a cause for Him. The knowledge of man that He (the Creator) is existent does not necessitate that he know what and how He is, just as his knowledge that the soul is existent does not necessitate that he know what and how it is. The same can be said about other spiritual matters. If they say: now you describe Him due to the shortage of knowledge

about Him as if He is unknown. It is said to them: it is so, on the one hand, if minds want to know His essence and description; and on the other hand, He is closer than every close one when His existence is proved by satisfactory evidences. From one side, He is clear to every one, and from another side, He is so mysterious that no one can realize Him. So is reason. It is clear through its evidences whereas it is hidden in .its essence

The naturalists say that nature does nothing meaningless nor does it leave anything incomplete and claim that wisdom proves that. It is said to them: who has given nature this wisdom then, and how does it not exceed the limits of anything, which is something that minds fail to learn even after long experiments? If they prove wisdom and power to be of nature in doing such things, they will acknowledge what they have denied because these are the attributes of the Creator. But if they deny this to be of .nature, then this is the creation calling out that it is the Wise Creator's

From the ancient nations, there were some people who denied the divine will and management in things and claimed that things came into existence by accident and by chance. They took some signs which were unlike the usual, such as when one was born with a finger less or more or when one was born disfigured, as evidence showing that things were not under will

.and management but by accidents as they happened

Aristotle refuted that by saying: that which comes into being by accident and chance is something that comes one time due to certain factors in nature making something unusual and not like the natural matters that happen in one form continually and .successively

Oh Mufadhdhal, you see the different species of animals following a regular pattern and having identical shapes. For instance, a human infant when born has two hands, two legs with five fingers or toes in each limb. But sometimes, as for one who is born unlike the usual, it is because of some reason in the womb or in the substance from which the infant grows, as it happens in some crafts when a skillful craftsman wants to be accurate in his craft but some defect in the raw material or tools affects his production. Such a thing may happen to the children of animals for the reasons we have mentioned that a child may be born with less or more or disfigured limbs, but .most of them are born sound with no defect

The defects that happen in some things because of some shortage do not mean that all the things have come by accident with no maker. So are things in nature. The saying that things have come into existence by accident and chance is totally wrong .and nonsensical

If they say: why does such a thing happen? It is said to them: to know that things are not created inevitably by nature nor by something

else, as some people say, but are created with will and management by a Wise Creator Who has made nature run most of the time in certain routines and sometimes in variation because of some temporary causes, so it is concluded that nature is managed by the Creator and it needs His power to attain its purposes and complete .its acts. Blessed be Allah, the Best of creators

Oh Mufadhdhal! Take what (the knowledge) I have given you, and keep what I have presented you, and be to your Lord grateful, and to His blessings a praiser, and to His .guardians an obeyer

I have explained to you a part from the whole and a little from plenty of evidences of creation and proofs of the right management and ordinance. Think of them deeply ’.and take a lesson

Al-Mufadhdhal said, ‘My master, with your assistance I acknowledge that and will inform of it Inshallah.’ He put his hand on my chest and said, ‘Keep (memorize) it by the will of Allah and do not forget, Inshallah.’ I fainted to the ground, and when I regained consciousness, he said to me, ‘How do you see yourself, Mufadhdhal?’ I said, ‘By the help and assistance of my master (Imam as-Sadiq), I am not in need of the book that I have written and the knowledge is before me as if I am reading it from ’.my palm. Praise and thanks be to my master as he deserves

He said, ‘O Mufadhdhal, make your heart attentive and prepare your attention, mind and

tranquility for I shall deliver to you from the knowledge of the heavens and the earth and what Allah has created in them and between them of His wonderful creatures, and all kinds of angels and their ranks and positions up until the farthest lote-tree, and of the rest of the creation from the jinn and human beings to the lowest seventh earth and what there is under the soil so that what you perceive shall be a part of many parts. You may leave if you want with the mercy and blessings of Allah. You are to us in an honorable place, and your position in the hearts of the believers is as the position of water to the thirsty. Do not ask me about what I have promised you until I myself tell you.'

Al-Mufadhdhal said, 'I left my master with that which no one had ever left with.'"

endnote

[۱] One hundred and ten volumes in the new editions.

[۲] Qur'an, ۱۴:۷.

[۳] Mahram woman is a woman with whom it is not permissible to get married, such as one's mother, sister, daughter, aunt...etc.

[۴] Qur'an, ۹۹:۷-۸.

[۵] A kind of spider.

[۶] It might be the flamingo or its like.

About center

In the name of Allah

هَلْيَسْتَوِيالَّذِينَيَعْلَمُونَوَالَّذِينَلَايَعْلَمُونَ

?Are those who know equal to those who do not know

al-Zumar: ٩

:Introduction

Ghaemiyeh Computer Research Institute of Isfahan, from ٢٠٠٧, under the authority of Ayatollah Haj SayyedHasanFaqihImami (God blesses his soul), by sincere and daily efforts of university and seminary elites and sophisticated groups began its activities .in religious, cultural and scientific fields

:Manifesto

Ghaemiyeh Computer Research Institute of Isfahan in order to facilitate and accelerate the accessibility of researchers to the books and tools of research, in the field of Islamic science, and regarding the multiplicity and dispersion of active centers in this field

and numerous and inaccessible sources by a mere scientific intention and far from any kind of social, political, tribal and personal prejudices and currents, based on performing a project in the shape of (management of produced and published works from all Shia centers) tries to provide a rich and free collection of books and research papers for the experts, and helpful contents and discussions for the educated generation and all classes of people interested in reading, with various formats in the .cyberspace

:Our Goals are

(propagating the culture and teachings of Thaqalayn (Quran and Ahlulbayt p.b.u.t-

encouraging the populace particularly the youth in investigating the religious issues-

replacing useful contents with useless ones in the cellphones, tablets and computers-

providing services for seminary and university researchers-

spreading culture study in the publich-

paving the way for the publications and authors to digitize their works-

:Policies

acting according to the legal licenses-

relationship with similar centers-

avoiding parallel working-

merely presenting scientific contents-

mentioning the sources-

.It's obvious that all the responsibilities are due to the author

:Other activities of the institute

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Launching the website with this address: www.ghaemiyeh.com-

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Holding virtual educational courses for the public-

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Producing thousands of research software in three languages (Persian, Arabic and- English) which can be performed in computers, tablets and cellphones and available and downloadable with eight international formats: JAVA, ANDROID, EPUB, CHM, PDF, HTML, CHM, GHB on the website

Also producing four markets named "Ghaemiyeh Book Market" with Android, IOS,- WINDOWS PHONE and WINDOWS editions

:Appreciation

We would appreciate the centers, institutes, publications, authors and all honorable .friends who contributed their help and data to us to reach the holy goal we follow

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